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AMERICA IN THE WAR

I

WHY WE WENT TO WAR

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President Woodrow Wilson.

AMERICA IN THE WAR

WHY WE WENT TO WAR

BY

CHRISTIAN GAUSS

AUTHOR OF "THE GERMAN EMPEROR AS SHOWN BY HIS PUBLIC UTTERANCES"

ILLUSTRATED

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PREFACE

I CANNOT pretend that the following account is dispassionate, and I realize that in preparing it I have done what Burke said he did not know how to do. I have drawn up an indictment against a whole people for their complicity in the crimes of the rulers whom they have accepted. As an American of South German blood, I confess readily to an inherited dislike and distrust of the Prussian. I have tried, nevertheless, to represent him in his habit as he lives, and to draw out fully the implications in his attitude and philosophy. My ancestors and the Prussian were poor neighbors, and the traditional bitterness of that quarrel may have obtruded itself. In the interest of making my contentions clear to others not so unhappily familiar with him, I may unconsciously have overstated.

For this reason, in dealing with the immediate causes of the war, in my desire to be fair I have treated the evidence the more scrupu-

lously. The documents quoted, which constitute the most serious indictments of Germany, are therefore drawn wherever possible, and almost entirely, from German sources. The remainder of the volume dealing with our international relations is based upon official communications and the results of government investigations.

Though I have presented some material recently discovered, and some old material in a new light, much, if not all, of the evidence has already been sifted by abler hands. I wish, therefore, to acknowledge my indebtedness to those upon whose work I have drawn most freely, especially to the Department of Civic and Educational Co-operation of the Committee on Public Information, the value of whose important monographs is not yet sufficiently recognized.

In preparing Chapter I, I have frequently fallen back upon *Conquest* and *Kultur*, by Professors Notestein and Stoll. In Chapter V it has been impossible to add anything of importance to "German War Practices," by Professor Munro, and in Chapter VIII I have

used the materials offered in the digest of "German Plots and Intrigues," by Professors Sperry and West. Professor Harding's "Outline History of the War," Mr. Altschul's "German Militarism," and the *War Cyclopædia* have been particularly helpful. I have used also the many publications of the *American Association for International Conciliation* and am especially indebted to its officers for permission to use their excellent text of Prince Lichnowsky's "Memorandum" in proof.

In dealing with the diplomatic correspondence between the United States and Germany, I have quoted the documents from the Special Supplements to the *American Journal of International Law* of July, 1915, and October, 1916, where they are accessible in accurate text and ordered form. This phase of the subject has been so authoritatively covered by James Scott Brown in his "A Survey of International Relations Between the United States and Germany, 1914–1917," that no later student can cross his path without being guided and enlightened on the questions of international law involved. Although it has in some cases been impossible

to compare translations with original texts, in no case has any document been cited about whose authenticity or general accuracy there can be any legitimate question. The important statements in Chapter III by Prince Lichnowsky and Doctor Mühlon have been acknowledged by their writers. The incidental sources of information are so varied that enumeration is here impossible, and some of the more important will be referred to in the notes.

I could have done justice to the friendly suggestions and assistance of my colleague, Professor Dana C. Munro, only by making this volume much more scholarly and adequate to its purpose. His aid and that of many other friends has made my task a pleasure.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The demand for a new edition of this volume after the conclusion of hostilities made possible a complete revision. I take this occasion to thank Professor Henry R. Shipman, of the History Department of Princeton University, for valuable criticisms and suggestions.

Christian Gauss.

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WHY WE WENT TO WAR

CHAPTER I

FUNDAMENTAL ANTAGONISMS

IT is a mistake to believe that a declaration of war is the beginning of a conflict. It merely marks the transference of that conflict from the field of statesmanship to the field of arms. It is the last gesture of diplomacy, its *non possumus* in the face of an impending crisis. Wars, recent wars especially, are the final expression of seemingly fundamental and irreconcilable antagonisms between nations or races, and the entire world was called to arms between 1914 and 1918, not so much because boundaries were threatened as because national ideals were at stake. When, on April 6, 1917, Congress called into extraordinary session by President Wilson, declared war upon Germany it meant that since American principles were threatened the people of the United States could do no less than accept the repeated challenges and meet force

with force. A desire for peace our government had shown from the beginning. Patience and forbearance had marked all its dealings with the rulers of Germany. Rarely in history had the head of a great Power reasoned so calmly, so earnestly, or for so long a time as did President Wilson with a declared and impenitent aggressor. He had even been willing to waive points of honor which had caused wars in the past—the destruction of property, the destruction of life, plots of ministers and military attachés against the sovereignty of the United States. Indeed, a goodly number of American citizens believed that he had been too patient, that the interests as well as the dignity of the United States demanded that the German ambassador should have been dismissed and determined military preparations begun before they were. Yet in the numerous exchanges of notes which had taken place between Woodrow Wilson and Germany's spokesman, one thing only had become clear. Germany either deliberately would not or could not understand the meaning of the key-words employed clearly and eloquently by the President. Germany did

not comprehend or would not recognize the significance of words like law, right, freedom, justice, humanity. The diplomatic controversy had not, therefore, been able to clear up the cardinal points at issue. It had merely set them into stronger relief, and made plain that in principles, in ideals, in all that to us makes life worth living, Germany and America were irreconcilably at odds.

Political differences, Aristotle has said, spring from small occasions, but from great causes. So it was here. The real causes and the real issues of the war are not to be sought in the Balkans or in the sinking of American ships. They are to be sought in certain fundamental national antagonisms. And it is in terms of these that future historians will explain the origins of our war with Germany. Some light we shall, in the present chapter, attempt to throw on the question of why this war, which we did not wish, had to come at all. In later chapters we shall deal with the question of why it had to come in 1917.

We have used the word antagonisms after careful deliberation. They were not differences

which admitted of immediate or peaceful adjustment. The gulf which divided the United States and Prussia was too deep and too wide to be easily bridged. The Prussian detested democracy through interest and principle; to Prussia's governing class the idea of democracy by which and in which we live as a people had been regarded as the corrosive poison which destroys great states. The German ideas on the mission of Germany, on the constitution and morality of states and on the place and function of an army were not only divergent from but absolutely incompatible with ours. Had the Prussian been allowed to realize the dearest purposes for which he was desperately fighting, and for which he was willing to sacrifice himself, there would and could have been no place in the world for another nation, equal in rights and privileges with his own. Our idea is, live and let live; his idea was, live and let others minister to your life or die. His conception was well expressed by Doctor Carl Peters, the well-known German traveller:

"Not to live and let live, but to live and

direct the lives of others, that is power. To bring peoples under our rational influence in order to put their affairs on a better footing, that is more glorious power."

Students who had followed the course of German history since the founding of the German Empire (1871) realized that there was this divergence of ideas, but most of them concluded that it was largely a matter of conflicting opinion. It did not occur to them that it would ever be translated into terms of war. It is necessary, therefore, for a proper understanding of why we went to war to impress upon ourselves the seriousness of the situation which had arisen in 1914. Let us put it clearly before us without bias or prepossession. Here is a story of something which actually happened. In the twentieth century, on August 3, 1914, before the representatives of nearly 70,000,000 people of every class, the speaker arose and announced:

"To-day our armies, your brothers and sons, have been sent, not by your mandate, but by your master's order, into a neighboring unarmed land. It is an invasion by force; they will go with cavalry and cannon to live in that land, to

take possession of telegraph and trains. It is a country with which we are at peace, against which we have no grievance. It has never wronged us. We are even bound by treaty not to do this, and your minister of foreign affairs and your minister of war promised you last year that this would not be done. We have given our word as a nation. I know that what we are doing is contrary to international law. . . ."

But, you say, at this point delegates, outraged and excited, rose on the right, in the centre, on the left, and interrupted, shouting: "But—but—this is unheard of—this spells national disgrace; this is betrayal of trust, dishonor."

No, neither on the left nor in the centre nor on the right. No one rose, no one interrupted. They did not even shuffle their feet. The speaker concluded: "Necessity knows no law." They listened, thought it over, were proud and pleased. They applauded.

The listeners were the chosen representatives of all Germany. The speaker was Chancellor von Bethmann-Hollweg, a German semi-liberal, by your leave, as liberal certainly as were his successors Michaelis and Hertling, and

the occasion was a solemn session of the German Reichstag.*

Just as Von Bethmann-Hollweg represented the attitude of the rulers of Germany, so the audience which approved and applauded represented that of the German people. Those who tried to believe, therefore, that there was a difference between the German people and their rulers and that any serious friction would arise between them so long as they were undefeated were indulging a vain hope. There was no great difference between the German people and their rulers. The important difference was between the German people† and ourselves.

We in America were unwilling to recognize the seriousness of this situation for two reasons: in the first place we were familiar in this country with a type of German often represented among our immigrants, whom we recognized as

* In the above passage I have not quoted or even paraphrased Von Bethmann-Hollweg's speech. I have tried to bring out its implications as they were known to the body he was addressing.

† Virtually all classes of the German people acquiesced in and justified the action of the government in invading Belgium. That the government attempted to misrepresent the situation is true, but it is also true that an earnest desire for truth and justice could have made itself felt.

a good-natured, thrifty, and loyal citizen; and in the second place we felt that the spirit of Germany was truly expressed in the works of men like Schiller (1759–1805) and Goethe (1749–1832), the best-known German poets, who represented the greatest period in German literature. What, we asked, has become of the good fellow we used to know, the docile, blue-eyed, fair-haired German Michel, who loved his pipe and his bowl and his fiddlers three? *

It must be understood that this type of German had never represented the Prussian. He was usually the South German, and furthermore he exemplified a type and generation which was unfortunately tending to disappear. One of the characteristics of this type had been its readiness to accept authority, its docility, and docile the Germans still were; that is why they had changed, for they had accepted a new master who boasted that he had power of life and death upon them.† Why this was so and under what

* Michel is the traditional representative of Germany, as Uncle Sam is of the United States and John Bull of England.

† See Emperor Wilhelm's speech, November 23, 1891: "It may come to pass that I shall command you to shoot your own relatives, brothers, yes, parents—which God forbid—but even then you must follow my command without a murmur."

unhappy compulsion such a transformation had taken place will be later abundantly evident.*

Just as the type of German with whom we were familiar for the most part no longer represented the spirit of Germany in 1914, so, too, the best-known German poets were likewise spokesmen of an age and temper that had disappeared. They had been liberal and cosmopolitan. About 1800 Schiller was developing the theory of the *Weltbürger*, the citizen of the world, and chose as the subjects of his great plays Wilhelm Tell, the Swiss national hero, the Maid of Orleans, the French national heroine, and Mary Stuart, a Queen of Scotland. They were all treated with rich sympathy and understanding. It is difficult to imagine Hauptmann

* The Germany that we were fighting was Prussianized Germany, and it is interesting to note that after the defeat of the German army indications of this divergence between South Germans and Prussians which had always existed in the past began to reappear. The most striking instance of this was the interview given out by Count von Hertling, the Bavarian, who had been chosen as Imperial German Chancellor to succeed Michaelis, and had been in office up to the time when after the defeat of the German armies (October, 1918) negotiations for an armistice were begun by the new government first represented by Prince Max of Baden. Von Hertling died early in January, 1919, and a few days before his death he is said to have given out an interview in which the following striking sentiments appeared:

"The animosity of a great majority of the Germans toward Prussia will have a decisive influence on the future configuration of Central Europe. . . . At Munich, as at Stuttgart and Cologne, there is re-

or Sudermann doing as much. Of Jingo patriotism Goethe, the large-minded, spoke disparagingly as *jene alte Römer Tugend*, that old-fashioned Roman virtue. Lessing said it was a virtue of which he was happy to say he had little. Herder, one of the few Prussian men of letters of any rank, ran away from Prussian militarism in order to breathe the more liberal air of Catherine the Great's Russia.

The difference between these men of letters and their successors becomes plain when we remember that none of them had believed in *Kultur*. The idea of *Kultur* would have been as antipathetic to them as it came to be to us after 1914. *Kultur* meant a culture which was strictly and exclusively German and which banned all elements of foreign origin. It implied that there was a particular virtue in everything of Germanic origin and invention. It was culture as

sentment against Prussia for having so badly steered the common ship, and let it be understood that by Prussia not the country, but the caste and the political system, is meant. If the present ideas follow their course, momentous historical events soon will occur, and the name of Prussia will disappear from the map of Europe."

Similar sentiments were expressed by the Socialist Kurt Eisner, head of the Provisional Government in Bavaria after the flight of the King. The plans for a German republic drawn up in Berlin after the abdication of Wilhelm II involved a serious reduction of Prussia's importance in the German confederacy.

interpreted by that later generation which believed that *echt deutsch* was the superlative of excellent. The conception of Goethe and Schiller had been quite the opposite. It involved the idea of a well-rounded personality and thoroughly human development in the widest sense, and for this reason both of them had drawn widely upon the best ideas and ideals of other peoples in antiquity as well as in modern times. Indeed, Goethe was far more like a Greek of the age of Pericles than a Prussian of 1914. The German had changed as had the spirit of his literature. The good old German Michel had become Prussianized, had donned the spiked helmet and learned to sing *Deutschland über Alles* as a result of the same influences which had transformed the humane conception of culture into the narrow idea of *Kultur*. Germany had become Prussianized.

This important transformation had taken place almost unnoticed by ourselves, for America, and indeed modern Europe, lost touch with Germany in the events after 1864, which led to the formation of the German Empire, and from that time on Germany followed a line of develop-

ment toward autocracy, the creation of a great state controlled by an hereditary ruler, which was the direct opposite of the movement which was taking place among the other nations and ourselves. While all other European countries were advancing along democratic lines Germany was going back in spirit to what Prussia had been. In political matters she was the hermit-crab of the nineteenth century. While other governments were reducing themselves to a common basis of liberal constitutions and democratic spirit which bade fair to bring in a new era of varied but none the less equal nations mingling in a larger cosmopolitanism, the Prussian sulked in his tent or drilled behind the guard-house. Let us consider how this had come about.

In the earlier half of the nineteenth century the Germans had sought to realize in politics two principal ambitions. They desired national unity and they desired liberty. The liberal movement had resulted in the Revolution of 1848, which unfortunately failed to achieve its purpose and incidentally brought as exiles to our country many of the German liberal leaders, like

Karl Schurz. These liberal leaders had seen in the power of the German autocrats, her many kings and princes who were jealous of each other's rights and prerogatives, the chief obstacles both to national unity and to democratic government. The discredit into which the liberals fell after the unsuccessful Frankfort Parliament (1848) may be said to have left Germany at the mercy of Bismarck and Prussia, who were to realize for her that other German aspiration toward national unity. The failure of the democratic leaders and the signal triumphs of Prussia in later establishing this national unity, coupled with an unexampled increase in material prosperity, were to beget a type of government and an attitude of mind with which the rest of the world was unfamiliar. Germany was reverting toward monarchical and autocratic types of government and diverging from the modern world.

It is in this new process of Prussianization that the antagonisms between Germany and ourselves began to develop, for they had their origins in the Prussian character and in certain theories of the state which were promul-

gated and developed about a century ago by theorists like Hegel (1770–1831) and Fichte (1762–1814), who formulated and defended the Prussian state, in terms which we shall consider later.

But before discussing these Prussian ideals in detail, it is well to recall the events which led to the unification of Germany. The liberal movement had failed. Bismarck and his less capable master Wilhelm I (then King of Prussia) were waiting their opportunity to establish Prussian supremacy and make their state the centre of the new united Germany, which they felt must inevitably come. This they did by a series of three wars. In 1864 they took Schleswig-Holstein from Danish control in a war in which Austria was their ally. Austria had been Prussia's great rival for German leadership. Two years later, in 1866, as Bismarck planned, hoped, and expected, difficulty arose between Austria and Prussia over the government of the territory taken from Denmark. He provoked a war. The moment was favorable, and after a campaign, which lasted but a few weeks, Austria was defeated and Prussia's position as head of the

German states securely established. The indemnity demanded of Austria ($15,000,000) was small and the punishment inflicted upon her, with the exception of her loss of prestige and position in German affairs, was slight. To complete his programme, to quiet opposition to Prussian leadership and autocratic methods at home among the remaining liberals, and to bind the South German states to the new union, he felt that a war with France was necessary, and provoked one in 1870 by deliberately misrepresenting the contents of a telegram received from King Wilhelm of Prussia.*

Owing to Prussia's superior military organization she achieved complete victory over France with relatively slight losses, took from her Alsace-Lorraine and an indemnity of 5,000,000,000 francs. In addition she succeeded in establishing and proclaiming the birth of the German Empire with Prussia at its head in 1871.

In attempting to understand the subsequent aggressive attitude of Germany, we must not

* This telegram, the famous Ems Despatch was an account by the King of Prussia of his interview with the French ambassador. By manipulating it Bismarck made France appear as an insulted aggressor and fired German sentiment against her, from which the war resulted.

forget the effect of these three wars which she had deliberately provoked, which had been extraordinarily successful and had laid the basis for her great commercial prosperity. In the first place it gave immense prestige to her army and in the second place the attitude of a large part of the German population had come more and more to resemble that of an elated people following the advance of a victorious army. In this respect the effect of the Franco-Prussian War was disastrous. It did not unify Germany in the same way that the Italian wars unified Italy.

Prussia was not attempting, as the world fondly imagined, to bring about the true nationalization of Germany. She wished to create and did create a greater Prussia and gave to the new state instead of liberal institutions her mediæval-minded monarch and his efficient organization and militarism. The pliant little states of Saxony, Bavaria, and Wurttemberg, with an honorable tradition of decent living and love of literature and art which Prussia never had, were bound to her victorious chariot wheels. They hated Prussia, yet they became her vassals. She gave them an ideal Germany only in

name. They lost their independence because they had neither the means nor the will to defend it. And they lacked the will since they lacked the tradition of Anglo-Saxon freedom and were used to vassalage. Docility, as we have seen, was inherent in their temperament. Their necks were calloused to the feudal yoke. They wore it lightly, to be sure, for their submission was voluntary and not servile. It was part of their traditional organization. They accepted Prussia as their suzerain.

It would be a most serious error, however, to believe that this Prussianized German state was one which existed solely through the force of the ruler. This is very far removed from the truth. Prussia had realized the German desire for national unity. She had succeeded in doing what liberalism had failed to do, and with the continued success and prosperity of the new German Empire it received first the acquiescence and gradually the enthusiastic support of nearly all elements of the population. Both in its constitution and outward principles it came to exemplify the ideals of the great majority who later stood behind the Kaiser and his party in

the war as solidly as did any other of the allied peoples behind their government. The German state was not, therefore, an amalgam forced into cohesion and unity by mere pressure from above. It was the most recent but at the same time the most powerful of all the great single states. This the world was to learn from four years of bitter experience. It withstood many shocks, shocks which would have wrecked many a stanch commonwealth. For it had the two requisites of a stable and enduring state, which Siéyès had pointed out to Napoleon. "Power," he said, "must come from above. Confidence from below." And the German state had not only power and confidence coming from above and below, but the two were so subtly interfused that until Germany was defeated no allied statesman was able to discover a serious split or any marked line of cleavage.

Bismarck, as we have seen, was a master in political craft and in waiting for the opportune moment to use the military force which he spent his time in developing. Appetite had now grown by what it had fed upon, and Bismarckism was more powerful in Germany than ever.

He had set the standard of her later political morality. His successors were less astute but more unscrupulous. They were even more grasping and more eager, for they had discovered new incentives. Let us not quote Bernhardi, who was read comparatively little. Let us cite a leader of a large wing of German public opinion, Daniel Frymann, whose book, "If I Were the Kaiser," went through twenty-one printings in the three years from 1911 to 1914:

"Since Bismarck retired there has been a complete change of public opinion. It is no longer proper to say: 'Germany is satisfied.' Our historical development and our economic needs show that we are once more hungry for territory, and this situation compels Germany to follow paths unforeseen by Bismarck."

Under him Prussia had made herself supreme and Germany had achieved unity. She now wanted more. She was hungry for territory. She wanted colonies, and not only colonies in the islands of the seas and in far countries, but she wanted to expand and, to put it bluntly, to control and overrun territories in Europe. As usual, to justify this desire she developed a

theory, that of Pan-Germanism, which meant at first that she had the right and the duty to annex all those sections of Europe in which the populations had, or to her seemed to have, traces of Teutonic blood. She was young, she was growing. She needed "a place in the sun." *

These Pan-German race theorists, like Ludwig Woltmann and H. S. Chamberlain, carried their doctrine to such absurd lengths that they discovered Teutonic blood in nearly all the outstanding figures in history from Alexander the Great and Cæsar to Napoleon. Pamphleteers and later politicians likewise discovered Teutonic blood in most of those populations whom it was desirable to annex, and in the wake of the theorists advocated an ominous plan of imperialistic expansion. Whither these paths would lead is evident from the following extravagant programme announced by Bronsart von Schellendorf:

* This phrase was used by the German Emperor in speaking of the necessity of a larger navy in June, 1901. It meant at first a favorable economic position for Germany with regard to foreign commerce. The Emperor declared that Germany had achieved this, as indeed she had. Later, when German publicists, especially Pan-Germans, insisted that other powers were pursuing an "Einkreisungs Politik," a policy of encircling or hemming in Germany, the phrase was used to indicate Germany's need for colonies and territory.

"Do not let us forget the civilizing task which the decrees of Providence have assigned to us. Just as Prussia was destined to be the nucleus of Germany, so the regenerated Germany shall be the nucleus of a future empire of the West. And in order that no one shall be left in doubt we proclaim from henceforth that our continental nation has a right to the sea, not only to the North Sea, but to the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. Hence we intend to absorb one after another all the provinces which neighbor on Prussia. We will successively annex Denmark, Holland, Belgium, northern Switzerland, then Trieste and Venice, finally northern France from the Sambre to the Loire. This programme we fearlessly pronounce. It is not the work of a madman. The empire we intend to found will be no Utopia. We have ready to hand the means of founding it, and no coalition in the world can stop us."

It is plain that a new spirit had come over Germany. It is difficult to say how large a proportion of her population held views of which the above is an example. They were at least an influential faction, and the effect of their views, either implicit or explicit, will be found in virtually all of the earlier suggestions for "a German peace" gathered by the Swiss, Grumbach, in his interesting compilation on German an-

nexations, "Das Annexionistische Deutschland." To comprehend it we must remember that we are dealing with a new attitude and a new force, the mere expression of which was a threat and which we shall find voiced by representatives of all classes of the population. It is expressed in the following terms by the prophet Nietzsche in "Zarathustra":

"Ye shall love peace as a means to new wars, and the short peace better than the long. I do not advise you to work, but to fight. I do not advise you to compromise and make peace, but to conquer. . . . Let your labor be fighting and your peace victory. You say that a good cause hallows even war. I tell you that a good war hallows every cause."

But it may be objected that Nietzsche was a philosopher, a rhapsodist mumbling in his dreams, that what he said was only suggestion and read exclusively by university professors. The parents and children of Germany did not sympathize with such doctrine. Let us turn the pages of the Prussian Book of Life and read what was written, and, so far as we know, approved by many mothers and their sons. *Jung Deutsch-*

land was the official organ of Young Germany. It announced in an issue of October, 1913:

"War is the noblest and holiest expression of human activity. For us, too, the glad, great hour of battle will strike. Still and deep in the German heart must live the joy of battle and the longing for it. Let us ridicule to the utmost the old women in breeches who fear war and deplore it as cruel and revolting. No; war is beautiful. Its august sublimity elevates the human heart beyond the earthly and the common. In the cloud palace above sit the heroes, Frederick the Great and Blücher and all the men of action—the Great Emperor, Moltke, Roon, Bismarck—are there as well, but not the old women who would take away our joy in war. When here on earth a battle is won by German arms and the faithful dead ascend to heaven, a Potsdam lance-corporal will call the guard to the door and 'Old Fritz' (Frederick the Great), springing from his golden throne, will give the command to present arms. That is the heaven of Young Germany." *

Such, our Committee on Public Information informed us, were the doctrines taught to young lads of about the age of our Boy Scouts.

* The Pan-German citations in this chapter whose source is not otherwise indicated will for the most part be found in *Conquest and Kultur*, by Professors Notestein and Stoll. (Committee on Public Information.)

Grasping at straws in the flood we said to ourselves, but in the Social Democrats there is health and hope for a future of peace. With them we can argue. They will understand us.

This hope, however, was likewise vain. There was no common denominator for our American and these aggressive German ideals. Maximilian Harden, the editor of *Die Zukunft*, may be taken to have represented radical German opinion in its various stages. Yet on several occasions he showed himself no less eager for war than members of the ruling class. In 1911 when Germany, after appearing to desire it, did not start a war with France over the Morocco dispute, he was sadly disappointed and regretted that the German Empire "did not revive the ancient Prussian policy of conquest." He did, to be sure, protest in July, 1914, against the government's policy, but in December of that same year he wrote of the great war in exultation:

"Cease the pitiful attempts to excuse Germany's action. . . . Not as weak-willed blunderers have we undertaken the fearful risk of this war. We wanted it. Because we had to

wish it and could wish it. May the Teuton devil throttle those whiners whose pleas for excuses make us ludicrous in these hours of lofty experience. We do not stand, and shall not place ourselves, before the court of Europe. Germany strikes. . . . We wage it (the war) from the lofty point of view and with the conviction that Germany, as a result of her achievements and in proportion to them, is justified in asking and must obtain wider room on earth for development and for working out the possibilities that are in her."

Liebknecht,* too, was swept off his feet, and in the beginning was for war, as he himself told Ambassador Gerard. Sword-rattling in Germany, therefore, was not confined to the heretochs. The thousands of German people who read "If I were the Kaiser" thought William II was doing pretty well, only that he was too hesitant, too lacking in the courage of German conviction to take advantage of historic opportunities.

It is impossible to understand the war, there-

* Karl Liebknecht (1871–1919) was one of the most prominent members of the radical Socialist group and, after the abdication of Emperor William II, became the leader of the Spartaeus group of revolutionists. He advocated international Socialism (the brotherhood of all wage-earners of the world). Shortly after the war began he turned against the government. In 1916 he was sentenced to imprisonment for his anti-war attitude. He was killed in Berlin (it is said while attempting to escape from the police in January, 1919). He may be taken to have represented the most extreme type of German radical.

fore, if we assume that the spirit of Germany was like the spirit of America or that the conduct of the Germans in the war was due entirely to the fact that they were deluded by their rulers. If that had been the case the conflict could have been ended very simply and quickly. It would merely have been necessary for the allied aeroplanes to deluge the German trenches and back lines with copies of Woodrow Wilson's speeches. One copy in the hands of each German soldier would have ended the battles. When their officers were out of sight and hearing, and they often were, the privates would have held hurried whispered conferences. They would have waited until nightfall, have silently slunk over the top in platoons, have crossed through the hush of No Man's Land, and with a shout and sense of pride and relief have thrown themselves into the arms of their deliverers, the French, English, and American troops, who were in very truth fighting for liberty and justice. Why did they not do this?

In the first place Woodrow Wilson's speeches were printed in Germany, garbled at times, to be sure, but often in toto and without change, and

the German Chancellor von Hertling, before the Reichstag and the country, answered the speech of January 8 and discussed in detail the famous fourteen articles, on which peace was to be based.

The great mass of the people did not heed such statements for they were animated by an entirely different ideal and were listening to what, for them, was a higher music. The reason for their indifference may be summed up in a single phrase, almost as common in Germany as liberty in America. That phrase is *Das Deutschtum.*

And what is *Das Deutschtum?* It is, or rather was, the mystic conception of the mission, the power, and the privileges of the German people, which was to be realized by the German state. It was a national delusion which had begotten an attitude and a programme which made Germany an impossible member of a world federation. The importance of this conception is capital and must be insisted upon if we would understand the crisis in world politics in 1914 and the years following. We must explain to

ourselves a whole series of phenomena, that at first sight seem inexplicable. Why was it that a modern European people could have developed a philosophy like that expressed by Nietzsche and other representatives of all classes which we have already considered? How could they proclaim with such zeal and determination ideals like those of *Kultur* and Pan-Germanism? How could their spokesman bring himself to make a speech like Von Bethmann-Hollweg's and find a representative audience that would make no protest? How was it possible that they could invade Belgium, leaving such a wake of horrors and shell cathedrals like Rheims? How could they sanction a greeting like *Gott strafe England*, sink a passenger liner like the *Lusitania*, and then commemorate this fact by striking a medal? It is evident that behind all this there lay certain general conceptions, whose importance we did not realize. These general conceptions can all be summed up in the significant words *Das Deutschtum*.* And in dis-

* There are, of course, fanatical patriots in all countries. It is perfectly safe, however, for the historian to say that patriotism could not have taken these same forms or expressed itself in these same ways to the same degree in America or France or England.

cussing it we must remember that in history the immediate influence and power of a conception does not depend upon its truth but upon the number and determination of those who hold it. A madman with a delusion is more dangerous than a professor with the documents.

We had not understood the working of this spring to which the German responded, for we have not, indeed, none of the Allies have, anything which remotely corresponds to it in our national life. There is no parallel conception, and, therefore, no parallel word in French or Italian or English. When, for instance, we use the word Americanism we think of the principles by which we live, the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. We have chosen them as the foundation of our life. It is an inclusive conception, any man may share in these blessings and share in them equally with ourselves, whether he and his forefathers were Englishmen or Italians or Germans or Russians. Not only are we pleased to have the individual do this, but we are gratified when we find other nations like our allies which adopt much the same policy of liberalism and democracy.

Not so with *Deutschtum*. It is the very opposite. It is exclusive, intolerant; it is virulent international chauvinism. Its rights and privileges could be shared only by those who were of German blood. All others must recognize these rights. It was not something of their own election which the Germans had arbitrarily chosen to adopt. It was, so they believed, a mandate from on high. The Almighty had made them, so some of their leaders told them, the strongest, the most scientific, the most cultured people in the world. The earth and what it contains belonged, or should belong, to them. They as the greatest and most just of peoples would see to it that these bounties were properly used and distributed. For this reason coal and iron deposits in France and Belgium should be administered by them. No one, not even they themselves, could specify all the innumerable petty details of this new and necessary adjustment. They were, as we have seen, a young and growing people. As they grew their needs would naturally increase also and there was really no limit to what they might need and deserve. "In short," as one of their spokesmen has said, "we

must be allowed to be the judges of what we shall take." *

All this seems preposterous. That is why we had not recognized it, and yet we shall find that these ideas were expressed by men of the highest importance in the German Government and by leaders in her intellectual life. The Kaiser himself had said in a speech on December 18, 1901, that "To us, the German people, great ideals are a lasting possession, while with other peoples they have been more or less lost. It is now the German people whose special province it is to protect these great ideas, to foster them, to set them forth."

This conception, which was held by a great mass of the Kaiser's people, will be echoed by

* There is in Germany as in all other lands a great mass of the population which does not think, which has few ideas on domestic policy and none on foreign. The way in which the world is governed is to them a mystery. They know only that men must obey their rulers, and in Germany they had a far higher respect for constituted authority than in other lands. If ignorance is innocence, this large group may be absolved of the guilt of the war. There is another group of intelligent Germans who did not agree with the conceptions set forth. Numerically this group was probably a large one, but it proved itself to have been a fairly impotent party of protest. When we attribute the foregoing and following ideas to Germany, therefore, these exceptions must be made, but we must remember that these ideas were held consciously by the ruling class that were Germany, and were accepted by the obedient great mass of the unthinking. They provided the motivation for Germany's acts of aggression.

men like Adolf Lasson, one of the most prominent and learned professors of philosophy at the University of Berlin:

"One cannot rest neutral in relationship to Germany and the German people. Either one must consider Germany as the most perfect political creation that history has known or must approve her destruction, her extermination. A man who is not a German knows nothing of Germany. We are morally and intellectually superior to all, without peers. It is the same with our organizations and with our institutions."

It will be repeated by Ernst Haeckel, of Jena, the most widely known of German biologists:

"One single highly cultivated German warrior of those who are, alas, falling in thousands represents a higher intellectual and moral life value than hundreds of the raw children of nature whom England and France, Russia and Italy oppose to them."

The church turned in no divergent testimony. Doctor Paul Conrad, pastor of the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church in Berlin, frankly admitted: "We feel ourselves to be the bearers of

a superior *Kultur*," and he was sure that through the victory of their arms the Germans would bring about a new efflorescence of humanity "through the German nature," which would prove a blessing to other nations as well. Such statements could have been gathered by thousands from humbler subjects of the empire.

This conviction of superiority, this sense of Germany's special mission in the world, was the source from which were derived her fatal notions of the supermorality of the German state, the necessity for and the justification of militarism. Any state which interfered with the carrying out of her lofty mission in reshaping the world was, in her eyes, guilty of aggression. That is why in German opinion the war was regarded as a defensive war, and why the Kaiser was allowed to declare it as such without consulting the Reichstag, which represented the German people, or, indeed, even the Bundesrath, which represented the states and free cities of the empire. That is also why the Germans entered upon it with very general enthusiasm, and carried it on with a ruthlessness that would in many cases have shamed the Hun.

This conception of *Deutschtum* was fundamental in the antagonism between Germany and the United States and the other allied nations. It was dangerous because it implied and justified the programme of Pan-Germanism, which we have already considered, and because it had developed the will and the means to carry this programme into execution. With regard to the means at its disposal, the two most important instruments which we shall consider were, first, its conception of the state (autocracy), and, secondly, its idea of the function and attitude of an army (militarism).

Let us consider first this autocratic conception of the state and contrast it with our own. Briefly stated, we might say that the distinction between the two conceptions lies in the fact that we Americans believe that the state exists for us, that it is to do our will; in short, we are the state and, as Walt Whitman has said, it is "you and me." It has no existence outside the citizens who compose it, and from us it receives its power and its life. If it is immoral we who are it are immoral. We are responsible for its actions, and we therefore desire them to con-

form to a standard as high as our own. The Prussian conception of the state is in spirit the direct opposite of this. In its present form it is scarcely more than a century old, and was a development of the philosophies of Fichte and Hegel. The state does not exist for the individual, the individual exists for the state. It is not "you and me." It is something far greater, higher, and more powerful than all its citizens. Stripped of all its mysticism, it is the idea of the superman carried over into statecraft. Without it the individual is nothing and has no rights. So, for instance, according to Hegel, though the individual can demand that another individual in the state respect him, he cannot expect the state itself to respect him or his rights. He must respect it, for it does not exist by virtue of him and his fellows. It is something quite independent of and above him. He cannot, therefore, pretend to rule it, but must allow it to rule him. The idea of the state, Hegel goes on to say, "should be venerated as a real God upon earth." Furthermore, it is not something passive, static, but dynamic, with a will of its own.

The ordinary standards of morality cannot, therefore, be applied to it.*

The doctrine is therefore essentially aggressive. This irresponsible state was controlled by an autocrat, the King of Prussia and Emperor of Germany, who was not elected by or responsible to the people, but who considered himself, even if all of his subjects did not, divinely appointed to carry out the mission of Germany. The development of the conception of German superiority had led many to believe that just as this Prussian state became supreme in Germany, so Germany should become in the world. There was room for nothing above it, for it could not allow itself to be fettered or bound. When we spoke, therefore, of fighting autocracy we meant that we were fighting not only, or indeed not so much, against the *inner* organization of the German Empire, but against its implied and often expressed *outward* purposes of aggression which would have made democracy and a free life in other nations impossible.

* This theory is not essentially different in this regard from the generally condemned notions of Machiavelli, to whom the Prussian historian and philosopher, Treitschke, frequently refers. It was more dangerous, since with the German conception of *Deutschtum* the state could command the enthusiastic loyalty of the individual as Machiavelli's prince never could.

If this conception of the autocratic German state was an implied threat against the freedom and independence of other nations and therefore against ourselves a certain group of enthusiasts for *Deutschtum* consciously directed this threat at America. The Pan-German organ, the *All-deutsche Blätter*, of September 20, 1902, contained the following: "In one hundred years the American people will be conquered by the victorious German spirit so that it will present an enormous German Empire. Whoever does not believe this lacks confidence in the strength of the German spirit." *

In 1903 Wilhelm Hübbe-Schleiden wrote: "At the present moment the centre of German intellectual activity is in Germany; in the remote future it will be in America. Let them (the Germans in America) show that they mean to maintain *Deutschtum*, and then immigration may be directed to America with impunity."

Doctor Otto Hötch, professor of history in the War Academy of Berlin, had also written in August, 1902: "The most dangerous foe of Germany in this generation will prove to be the

* This passage was written by a New York German, Robert Thiem.

United States." Lieutenant von Edelsheim, detailed to work with the General Staff in 1901, had prepared a study in which he said that "Germany is the only great power which is in a position to conquer the United States." Though we may believe that these statements were extreme, they were none the less threatening and dangerous.

According to the German conception the essence of the German state was force, and the force through which this state realized itself was the army. This brings us immediately to the second conception of militarism, which again was fundamentally antagonistic to our own. The American attitude, as well as the contrast, was well expressed by President Wilson in his speech at West Point on June 13, 1916, when he said:

"The spirit of militarism is the opposite of the civilian spirit, the citizen spirit. In a country where militarism prevails the military man looks down upon the civilian, regards him as intended for his, the military man's, support . . . and just as long as America is America, that spirit and point of view is impossible with us."

In Germany the direct opposite was the case. The army was supreme in the state. It was not responsible to any civil power, but to the Emperor alone. The soldier swore allegiance not to the constitution but to the Kaiser, his "war lord." It was this peculiarly militaristic arrangement of the state which led Napoleon to say that Prussia was hatched out of a cannon-ball, and justified the French military attaché's observation in 1870 that "Other states possess armies, in Prussia the army possesses the state." The army's function was to strengthen and extend the state and it could not therefore be restrained to the same degree as other armies, by consideration of law or humanity. "For me," the Emperor is reported to have said, "humanity ends with the Vosges."

In order that this army might be made efficient to the highest degree, the Prussians developed and transmitted to the German people a conception of discipline which was remarkable and in its interest they often submitted to extraordinary indignities. Prussian discipline may be defined as subservience tempered by enthusiasm. How far this spirit could be carried in Germany

was evident from the accounts of the trial of Rosa Luxemburg.*

Evidences of the power of this same spirit were given to the world in the notorious Zabern Affair in Alsace in 1913. It seems that a superior officer showed his contempt for the civil population and instructed his command that if they stabbed an Alsatian who insulted them they would not only go unpunished, but receive a reward. The conduct of the troops in the town and the attitude of the officers had been so overweening that they had made themselves thoroughly disliked. An arrogant young

* Rosa Luxemburg, killed by a mob in January, 1919, was a leader of the German radical and anti-militaristic movements. She had before the war denounced the excesses of the system in speeches and was arrested and tried. For the purposes of her defense the radicals gathered testimony to justify her, and in each case had found witnesses brave enough to testify against the military. The evidence was overwhelming, and at the request of the government the trial was adjourned against the protests of the defense early in July, 1914. A few of the most revolting cases are given below:

"In the Queen Augusta Guard Regiment No. 4, Sergeant Waske ordered a grenadier to lie down before a cuspidor, and then called out 'Drink.' The grenadier drank from it quite obediently, which proves that 'servile obedience' (*Kadavergehorsame*) is no idle phrase."

"In the Guard Train Battalion, Non-Commissioned Officer Hoffman ordered exercises which consisted in bending the knees, while the men had to hold a full manure-box in their outstretched arms."

"In the 50th Infantry, Non-Commissioned Officer Poeselt, at inspection of the rooms, ordered the recruits to take cuspidors into their hands, and he then threw the disgusting contents into their faces."

"In the King's Grenadier Regiment No. 7 a recruit was also ordered to drink the contents of a cuspidor."

officer, Lieutenant Förstner, according to the mayor, was jeered by some children as he passed in the street. Förstner rushed upon the sidewalk, drew his sword, and slashed a lame cobbler sitting before his shop over the head. The evidence seemed to indicate that the cobbler was quite innocent. Förstner, to quiet the popular outcry, was sentenced by court-martial for a short period. This very slight sentence was very strongly protested against by the military president of Berlin, and to prove the disregard of the military for civilian opinion Lieutenant Förstner was immediately afterward promoted. This spirit of militarism, if it brought about discipline and efficiency, made ideals of democracy like our own impossible.

In the last half of the century then, as we have seen, the conviction had increased among the Prussians that the greatest state was Prussia and the greatest civilization the Prussian. It was the mission of the state to establish and increase its dominance and to spread *Kultur*. Those who refused to recognize its supremacy or accept its Kultur were attempting to interfere with the course of history and deserved no con-

sideration. Prussia was far more than "a geographical expression." It was little less than an implied state of war against the rest of the world. This Prussian ideal it had created and had imposed upon Germany. It took but little persuasion to convince Saxons and South Germans of their superiority,* even a superiority which they shared with the Prussians, and they had come to accept the notion. Grotesque and fantastic as it seems, it was nevertheless the motive force in recent history. It was the delusion not of a few dreamers but of millions of the subjects of the Kaiser. This superiority must make itself felt. Not until *Deutschland* should *in esse* and *in posse* have erected herself *über Alles* would *Deutschtum* be realized. It is for this reason that Prussia's leaders were quite sincerely able to speak of the intolerable pressure upon her boundaries. There was pressure, but it was not pressure from without. Were Holland or Belgium or France or Switzerland or

* Throughout the nineteenth century one of the main activities of German historians and philosophers had been to reinterpret the history of the world, of Europe and Germany, in order to give Germany a greater and more important rôle. The movement received an immense impetus along this line after the victories over France in 1870. *Cf.* the study by the Swiss, A. Guilland, "L'Allemagne nouvelle et ses historiens"; also Munroe Smith, "Militarism and Statecraft," pp. 211–223.

even Russia* practising or pondering aggression? Hardly. The pressure was very real, but it was pressure from within.

When we couple willingness to accept authority with such an ideal and programme we can begin to understand what happened in 1914. For we must not imagine that the Prussian "loved evil for its own bitter sake." To him Prussia and the war that made for her glory were the highest good on earth. This fanaticism, this mysticism which was expressed in *Das Deutschtum* and this autocratic conception of the state and militaristic theory of the army, with their aggressive programme, we were fighting. It was necessary, if we were to maintain our liberties, to change the German attitude, and it could not be changed until the militaristic policy which had begotten it and which had been so successful had been defeated.

* The German Government had carefully fostered the idea of a "Slav peril," and we shall see that later its official legend of the "War of Self-Defense" threw the blame upon Russia. If there was in reality a "Slav peril" it is safe to say that it was not as serious as the German Government attempted to make it appear, and that in every case it was not the cause of the war. The inconsistency of this contention is plain from the attitude of the German population in August, 1914. People enter upon defensive wars with determination, but not with enthusiasm or exultation. The German attitude was not one of determination, it was one of very general enthusiasm.

These, then, were the true roots and causes of the great conflict.

This will explain why the Germans were our potential enemies in 1914. How they became our declared and open enemies will be plain as we trace the earlier stages of the World War, each phase of which will merely bring to the surface one more implication of their theory and programme.

CHAPTER II

THE CAUSE OF THE WORLD WAR

THE ideas which prevailed in Germany on the civilizing mission of that country, on the purpose of states and the function of the army, implied the necessity of war. This necessity was regarded by her leaders not as something dire to be forfended and deferred, but as a consummation which, though it might involve hardships and sacrifice, was none the less devoutly to be wished. War was as natural and desirable for the state as healthy exercise for the individual. It kept the body politic in strength and vigor. According to Hegel, wars are as salutary to the nations as the ocean winds that sweep and stir the waves are to the restless seas.* They prevent stagnation. This idea was repeated by great teachers like Clausewitz and Treitschke, and recently it had been

* *Cf.* J. B. Scott, "A Survey of International Relations Between the United States and Germany, 1914–1917." Pp. xxxv–cxiv contain excellent digests of the more important German theories of the state and its mission.

much more widely spread and reinforced by the application of ideas of biological evolution.* Since the state is force, "der Staat ist Macht," the supreme test of the right of survival among states is their ability to make war successfully and to conquer their competitors. "Success alone justifies war."† To understand German diplomacy and German psychology we must understand that every other state was regarded therefore as a rival and an enemy. States live not on their own inner strength, but on other states. Such conceptions Mr. Vernon Kellogg found to be very generally accepted by the members of the German General Staff, and naturally they assumed that all other countries held the same views but merely lacked the logic to formulate or the sincerity to avow them. Too long a peace was to this highly important and advanced wing of German thought a national calamity, and Germany had been at peace in Europe for over forty years. The time had come for the great catharsis which would restore the

* *Cf.* Vernon Kellogg, "Headquarters Nights," in *Atlantic Monthly*, vol. 120, pp. 145–153.

† General von Moltke, quoted by Jules Cambon in the "French Yellow Book," Document No. 3. Harden has also said: "Our success will absolve us."

state to its pristine health. Nowhere is this view more unreservedly expressed than in Bernhardi's "Germany and the Next War," and nowhere is it more clearly implied than in the military preparations made after 1911.

There was to be sure a small part of the population which understood but did not agree with this doctrine, and a very much larger part which did not understand such metaphysic and biology. According to the report of the French consuls in Germany in 1913 these consisted principally of the workmen, artisans, and peasants (peace-loving by instinct), a few of the nobility engaged in business, the members of the commercial classes whose enterprises depended on credit or were supported by foreign capital. "These classes of people either consciously or instinctively prefer peace to war; but they are only a sort of makeweight in political matters, with limited influence on public opinion, or they are silent social forces, passive and defenseless against the infection of a wave of war-like feeling."*

However, as we have seen, the party in favor

* "French Yellow Book," Document No. 5.

of peace, though it may have been the numerical majority, possessed no actual power. The real possessors of power in Germany were the party of the army and the Pan-Germanists, and as a matter of fact the two are almost co-ordinate. A German of authority, Kurt Eisner, writing in the *Neue Zeit*, April 23, 1915, made the following summary:

"Who wields the decisive influence on the trend of foreign politics in Germany? Who gives the life impulse to economic driving forces? Absolutely none other, for a quarter of a century, than the Pan-Germans. They have acquired a greater influence on the shaping of national policy than even the mightiest combination of interests among the great landowners and capitalists. In the course of years they have put through more measures than all the political parties and all the parliamentary subdivisions of Germany taken together."

They were busily preparing for the "inevitable" conflict which they themselves had made inevitable. Germany had increased her military establishment very decidedly in the years from 1911 to 1914. Her standing army in time of peace following these changes had grown from

544,000 to 815,000. During this period the *Wehrverein* conducted a very active campaign through the press and its efforts were rewarded not only by this increase in the size of the army, but also by the granting of a special war levy in the way of taxes on income and property, which was to net 250,000,000 marks for war purposes. When a nation in time of peace begins to mortgage its capital in the interest of its war establishment, the situation may well be considered threatening.

The explanations offered in the Reichstag were to the effect that recent events in the Balkans had altered the balance of power in Europe. This should be remembered when we consider the reasons why the Central Empires were so eager a year later to attack Serbia. The levy included large sums for modern material as well as a special fund which trebled the war treasury, kept in reserve for the first requirements for the mobilization; raising it from 150,000,000 marks in gold to 300,000,000 in gold plus 150,000,000 in silver. The only people to vote against this bill were the Poles, the Socialists, and the Alsace-Lorrainers.

One of the keenest observers in Berlin before the war was Baron Beyens, the Belgian minister. "We can hardly fail to see," he says, "in the 1913 act a preparation for making war at a not distant date. Its call to arms is as clear as the note of the bugle that summons men to the fight." * This is made increasingly plain from a secret report concerning this action which was prepared at Berlin on March 19, 1913, and which came into the hands of M. Etienne, the French Minister of War. It was printed as an enclosure in the second document of the "French Yellow Book," and contains a striking sentence, which shows how closely the projected war was connected with the idea of fulfilling Germany's high mission. "Neither ridiculous shriekings for revenge by French chauvinists, nor the Englishmen's gnashing of teeth, nor the wild gestures of the Slavs will turn us from our aim of protecting and extending *Deutschtum* all the world over."

But in addition to the desire to prepare for war, this same memorandum makes plain that it was part of the policy of the militarists to

* *Cf.* Beyens, "Germany Before the War," p. 128.

make the mere preparation for war so extensive and burdensome that war itself would be looked upon as a relief. "We must so manage matters that under the heavy weight of powerful armaments, considerable sacrifices, and strained political relations, an outbreak (*Losschlagen*) should be considered as a relief, because after it would come decades of peace and prosperity, as after 1870." This interesting document, certainly symptomatic if not official, also announced that plan of extending German influence through intrigue and the sowing of dissension in foreign countries with which we have since become only too familiar. Its authors likewise contemplated the invasion of Belgium and a very considerable programme of annexations in France and in Russia. Indeed, the war which was being prepared by the military party was in their minds directed against these two Powers who would be the first to be forced to recognize the supremacy of *Deutschtum*. After their decisive defeat, aggressive action would be taken against England, and possibly against America.

But the question is frequently asked: Was

the Kaiser not in favor of peace? The problem will be an interesting one to the future historian of the World War.

From the time of his accession in 1888 he had repeatedly announced himself in favor of peace, and had seemed to have coveted the distinction, so rare in his house, of being regarded as a prince of peace. In spite of his occasional truculence, I believe that in this he was sincere until the year 1911, or possibly a little later. He had, to be sure, done everything in his power to maintain the army at a high point of efficiency, and he preached to it and to his people the doctrine of its invincibility, and of the high mission of the German people. "We are," he had told his people, "the salt of the earth."* He felt that he owed his throne to the army, that his first duty was to it, and he announced to his officers in pride: "These are the gentlemen on whom I can rely."

In October of 1900, he had dedicated a statue to the Roman Emperor Trajan, on the pedestal of which he had engraved Latin lines to the effect that he, *imperator Germanorum*, had

* The Kaiser's speech, Bremen, March 25, 1905.

erected this monument to Trajan, *imperatori Romanorum.* On that occasion he made a speech which proved that he was as conscious as any of his subjects of the great but exceedingly dangerous mission of his country:

"Our German Fatherland, to which I hope it will be granted, through the harmonious co-operation of princes and peoples, of its armies and its citizens, to become in the future as closely united, as powerful, and as authoritative as once the Roman world-empire was, and that, just as in the old times they said: 'Civis romanus sum,' hereafter, at some time in the future, they will say, 'I am a German citizen.'"

But for all this, in spite of his extraordinary outbreak on the occasion of the departure of the German troops for China, and his seeming aggressiveness at Tangiers and Agadir, he wanted peace in the sense that he preferred peace to war. The peace which he desired was, however, a German peace, and he did not understand that it involved "either mutual concessions or a balance of armaments." * He wished Germany to be feared as well as re-

* "French Yellow Book," Document No. 7, Enclosure I.

spected and his whole world policy was based on this desire. Yet until 1911, possibly until a little later, he had kept his own army in leash. After this date a change took place in his own policy as well as in that of the military party. If they did not on all points coincide, it will be plain in the next chapter that the policies were not divergent and that, whatever his apologists may say, the Kaiser himself is personally very largely responsible for the outbreak of the World War. The generation which had grown up under the tutelage of teachers like Treitschke was now occupying most of the positions of power in the empire. Pan-Germanism, with its programme, was a natural outgrowth. This programme of aggressive militarism and annexations had been developing its strength until it would have been almost impossible for the Kaiser, even had he wished to do so, to stem the tide. It was strongest in the party to which he looked for support, and he was out of sympathy with the Socialists, its enemies.

The settlement of the Morocco question in 1911 marks the final turn of German policy. It was then that the die was cast. That settle-

ment was looked upon by the majority of Germans, especially by the army, as a diplomatic defeat and a blow to German prestige. Germany, to be sure, had succeeded in establishing the principle that when others of the great Powers increased their dominions she, by that mere fact, was entitled to compensation and she had received such compensation in the French Congo. But the Germans, unable to forget their victory of 1870, expected from France a much greater humility. She should have spoken to the Imperial German Government with head bowed and hat in hand, instead of presenting herself as a nation with rights that deserved to be respected.

In addition to the regular mobilization of the German Army there is a preliminary measure which consists in warning men and officers of reserve to make the necessary preparations and to hold themselves ready for war. It is a general call to attention. We learn from the French ambassador at Berlin:

"This warning was given in 1911 during the negotiations which I was carrying on with regard to Morocco.

"Now it has been given again about ten days

ago—that is to say, at the moment of the Austro-Albanian tension. I know that this is so, and I have it from several different sources, notably from officers of the reserve who have told it to their friends in the strictest confidence."*

Plainly the army was growing restive and in need of exercise. Even a considerable wing of the Socialists urged war, as is plain from the statement by Harden, cited in the last chapter. The Emperor was running the risk of being considered more moderate than the Socialists. German aspirations and desire for prestige suffered a further check after the Balkan Wars in 1912–13, through which Turkey, Germany's ally, had been forced to surrender most of her territory in Europe; and especially after the second Balkan War, when Greece, Serbia, Roumania, and Montenegro succeeded in defeating Bulgaria, her remaining friend along the coveted corridor to the East.

Indeed, the Balkan States were beginning to act like independent entities, and seemed to block the possibility of further Austro-German expansion.

* *Cf.* "French Yellow Book," No. 3.

These outward happenings were serious, to be sure, but to the Kaiser one thing which happened at home was probably even more serious. After the Zabern incident a great outcry was raised by the element in favor of civilian control of the government, and especially by the Socialists. So strong was the movement that a vote of censure was passed against the Chancellor von Bethmann-Hollweg in the Reichstag. This, to be sure, involved no consequences, since according to the German autocratic system the chancellor is not responsible to the Reichstag but to the Emperor alone. But at the end of the session, on May 20, 1914, the Socialists had refused to rise and cheer for the Emperor, as had always been done on such occasions. The Emperor was still smarting under this slight when negotiations with Austria concerning the chastisement of Serbia began.

The most striking direct evidence of the Kaiser's change of front was given on November 6, 1913. It evidently strengthened an impression which had already been forcing itself upon Jules Cambon, the French ambassador at

Berlin, for under date of November 22 of that year he wrote as follows:

"BERLIN, November 22, 1913.

"I have received from an absolutely reliable source an account of a conversation which took place a fortnight ago between the Emperor and the King of the Belgians, in the presence of the Chief of the General Staff—General von Moltke. This conversation, it appears, has made a profound impression on King Albert. I am in no way surprised at the impression he gathered, which corresponds with what I have myself felt for some time. Enmity against us is increasing, and the Emperor has ceased to be the friend of peace." *

There can be no question of the reliability of M. Cambon's information, for the report of this conversation was given him by Baron Beyens, the Belgian minister at Berlin, who doubtless discussed the matter with King Albert himself. Baron Beyens says:

"On this occasion the Emperor told King Albert that he looked upon war with France as 'inevitable and close at hand.' What reason did he give for this pessimistic statement, which impressed his royal visitor all the more strongly

* "French Yellow Book," No. 6.

since the belief in the peaceful sentiments of the Emperor had not yet been shaken in Belgium? He pointed out that France herself wanted war, and that she was arming rapidly with that end in view, as was proved by the vote on the law enacting a three years' term of military service. At the same time he declared that he felt certain of victory. The Belgian monarch, who was better informed as to the real inclinations of the French Government and people, tried in vain to enlighten him, and to dispel from his mind the false picture that he drew from the language of a handful of fanatical patriots, the picture of a France thirsting for war.

"On the 6th of November General von Moltke, chief of the general staff, after a dinner to which the Emperor, in honor of his guest, had invited the leading officials present in Berlin, had a conversation with King Albert. He expressed himself in the same terms as his sovereign on the subject of war with France, asserted that it was bound to come soon, and insisted still more emphatically on the certain prospect of success, in view of the enthusiasm with which the whole German nation would gird up its loins to beat back the traditional foe. General von Moltke used the same blustering language that evening to the Belgian military attaché, who sat next to him at table. I have been told that later in the evening he showed a similar lack of reserve toward other military attachés in whom he was pleased to confide, or whom he wished to impress.

"The real object of these confidential outbursts is not hard to discover. They were an invitation to our country, face to face with the danger that threatened western Europe, to throw herself into the arms of the stronger, arms ready to open, to clasp Belgium—yes, and to crush her. When we think of the ultimatum issued to Belgium on the following 2d of August, we realize to what an act of servility and cowardice William II, through this Potsdam interview, would fain have driven King Albert."*

The fact that Von Moltke, chief of the General Staff, should have taken the pains to repeat the same views leads us to conclude that he and his imperial master had decided to "feel out" King Albert, and if possible, by convincing him of Germany's strength, induce him to step aside when the time should come for the invasion of Belgium. It is reasonable to believe that William II was already looking forward to this "necessity," and that he had already agreed with his chief of staff upon the terms under which was to be issued the ultimatum which shocked the neutral world.

The only question really open to historians is whether William II honestly believed that France was threatening him with war. In the

* *Cf.* Beyens, "Germany Before the War," pp. 36–38.

following year, he, with his advisers, was, as we shall see from German testimony, to decide that it would be to Germany's advantage to force the issue. He had reached an understanding with the army, and up to this time the power of the Kaiser had been the only effective check on the plans of the militarists and Pan-Germans. The conflict they had long desired was now bound to come. We have no evidence to show that the Kaiser sympathized with or encouraged their dreams of annexations. It is difficult to believe, however, after the statements of his chancellors and the results of the treaty of Brest-Litovsk that he disapproved of them. What these designs were we know from President Wilson's statement:

"Their plan was to throw a broad belt of German military power and political control across the very centre of Europe and beyond the Mediterranean, into the heart of Asia; and Austria-Hungary was to be as much their tool and pawn as Serbia or Bulgaria or Turkey or the ponderous states of the East. Austria-Hungary, indeed, was to become part of the Central German Empire, absorbed and dominated by the same forces and influences that had originally cemented the German States themselves. The dream had its heart at Ber-

lin. It could have had a heart nowhere else. It rejected the idea of solidarity of race entirely. The choice of peoples played no part in it at all. It contemplated binding together racial and political units which could be kept together only by force—Czechs, Magyars, Croats, Serbs, Roumanians, Turks, Armenians—the proud states of Bohemia and Hungary, the stout little commonwealths of the Balkans, the indomitable Turks, the subtile peoples of the East. These peoples did not wish to be united. They ardently desired to direct their own affairs, would be satisfied only by the presence or the constant threat of armed men. They would live under a common power only by sheer compulsion and await the day of revolution. But the German military statesmen had reckoned with all that and were ready to deal with it in their own way."*

Pan-Germans and militarists felt that the first step should and must be directed against France. How they intended to motivate such action is plain from the signed statement made for the Committee on Public Information by David Starr Jordan:

"In the summer of 1913 I learned of a meeting of the *Friedensfreunde* to be held in Nuremberg in July. I attended the meeting and be-

* Address of June 14, 1917.

came acquainted with a number of leading Democrats, and with a good many others interested in peace, though not on a democratic basis. I was invited to come back to speak in the German cities, and I found time in December . . . to give lectures in Frankfurt, Wiesbaden, Mannheim, Stuttgart, and Munich. Through my friends I learned a good deal of the plans of the Pan Germanists and especially of the German General Staff.

"In brief, they hoped to bring on war in 1914. Presumably, at that time, through disturbances to be created in Alsace-Lorraine. They were then proposing to take Belgium and Holland—Holland for the sake of making Antwerp the center for the coming attack upon England. They wished especially to take the two departments of Nord and Pas-de-Calais from France. They proposed to make of Boulogne the great seaport of Germany, surrounding its broad, flat bay with breakwaters, doing all this before England would enter the war, and removing the German fleet to Boulogne. They had a new German name for Boulogne, but I do not find it in my notes and do not recollect it. They were also to take Paris and exact an indemnity that would pay the expenses of the war; 25,000,000 marks was the figure I heard mentioned. After this they were to treat France with great lenience, relieving her of all necessity for maintaining an army and navy and defending her from her great arch-enemy, Great Britain. It was thought

that France being wholly degenerate would not resist, and she could then devote herself to commerce and to the continuing of loans of money to finance German industry. . . .

"I suppose that the Zabern incident and the arrest of 'Oncle Hansi' (Jean Jacques Waltz) were moves in the direction of inciting trouble in Alsace, getting a protest from France to be followed by a sudden ultimatum. The death of the Archduke (Francis Ferdinand, June 28, 1914), whether planned in Budapesth or not, served to make the way to war easier, by beginning it in the southeast." *

It is probable that William II, still smarting under the slight offered by the Socialists on May 20, 1914, and still chagrined over the outcome of the Morocco question and the Balkan Wars, was as anxious to show his power and re-establish his credit with all parties as he was to humiliate Serbia. It will be plain, moreover, that before Austria issued the ultimatum to Serbia he had decided to risk if not to provoke war with Russia and with France.

* *Cf.* "The Study of the Great War," by Samuel B. Harding, p. 27.

CHAPTER III

THE OCCASION OF THE WORLD WAR

IN 1914 Europe was in a state of tension which had lasted six years, and which was beginning "to try the nerves" of the great Powers. More than anything else the movement in the Balkans was responsible for this general restlessness. The situation, especially in view of the increase of armaments in Germany, of which we have already spoken, and the French reply, by increasing the period of military service from two years to three, and the general aggressiveness of Berlin, made war seem imminent. The Balkan Peninsula had become the storm-centre, for, as we have seen, the developments there were threatening to overturn the unfortunate system of balance of power on which European politics had so long rested. Yet in the early stages of the recent war we were inclined to pay too much attention to what was happening in the Balkans primarily, and

have therefore seen the developments that led to the conflict somewhat out of focus.

In July, 1914, the world was trying to look into the future through the passes of the Balkans. Events there which in ordinary times would have been of minor consequence loomed large and portentous. When a Bosnian, Gabrilo Princep, who was an Austrian subject, assassinated the Austrian crown prince, Francis Ferdinand, and his wife, and war followed, it was natural under the circumstances and under the stress of the first shock to attribute the war to Princep's crime. Yet the assassination of the archduke was no more the cause of the war in any philosophical sense than the fly on the telescope is the cause of the great spot on the sun. It was not the cause of the war, it was merely the occasion. The causes lay deeper as we have already seen. The war would have come in any case; Princep's crime merely made it certain that it must come in 1914. To understand the reasons for this we must take a rapid glance at the situation in the Balkans.

In 1908 Austria-Hungary had annexed Bos-

nia and Herzegovina, violating by this act Article XXV of the Congress of Berlin. Russia, which was inclined to assume the attitude of protector to the Slav states, and whose interests under the Congress of Berlin had been disregarded, had at that time not yet recovered from the Russo-Japanese War, 1904–5, and was forced to acquiesce when the Kaiser boldly proclaimed that he "took his stand in shining armor by the side of his ally." Little Serbia was, therefore, forced to submit, though the discontent at the action of Austria-Hungary was about as keen in the annexed provinces as it was in the kingdom of Serbia itself. This tension, which was the result of a violation of the principle of national self-determination, was bound to continue and to increase. France and England, who had already come to an *entente cordiale* after the settlement of the Egyptian question, refused to go to war over this increase of Austro-Hungarian influence. In 1911 came the second Morocco crisis, which, as we have seen, had particularly embittered Germany and aroused particular resentment in the German military party. But the great surprise

of this whole period occurred when Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Montenegro formed a secret league to expel Turkey from Europe and liberate their fellow Christians from Turkish misrule. They declared war on Turkey in October, 1912, and the great Powers, because of their own divergent and selfish aims, and the fact that they were taken unawares, failed to restrain the new alliance. Contrary to expectations, the Balkan allies met with full success, and Turkey was forced to surrender most of her territory in Europe, by the Treaty of London, May 30, 1913. The Central Empires, Germany and Austria, had of course expected that their ally, Turkey, would emerge victorious, or at least make a better showing.

Only a month later a new war broke out, when Bulgaria attacked her recent allies as a result of disputes over a division of conquered territory. Roumania joined Serbia, Greece, and Montenegro, and Bulgaria was defeated. Most of the conquered territory was therefore given to Greece, Serbia, and Montenegro, though, because of Austrian, German, and Italian objection, Serbia was denied any seaport

on the Adriatic. In both these wars Austria and Germany had failed to diagnose the situation and had supported the losing side, first Turkey and then Bulgaria. The loss of German prestige was the more serious, as the Turkish Army had been trained and equipped by Germans. The Balkans were therefore a sore point, and the increase in Serbia's power was to the Central Empires the more distressing, since it helped to block the way to the East, and made the dream of Middle Europe more difficult of realization. Serbia, furthermore, was beginning an agitation for a greater Serbia which was to include also the Serbs of the provinces so recently annexed to Austria-Hungary. England had acquired Egypt, and France Morocco. Germany and Austria-Hungary, hungry for increased power and territory, were far from satisfied.

Such was the situation when the Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife were shot down in the streets of the capital of Bosnia. Francis Ferdinand had given promise of becoming an able ruler of the Dual Monarchy. It is possible that had he arrived at power, he would

have given at least some rights to the oppressed nationalities in the conglomerate Hapsburg state. There is not the slightest probability, however, that he would have looked with favor on the desire of the Serbs to be united in a kingdom of their own.

His entry into Serajevo was particularly ill-timed, for to expect that at the time of the great Serbian national holiday the Bosnian Serbs, who had been forcibly annexed to the dominions of his house six years before, would deck their capital with flags and receive him with honor and gratitude was folly. The Serbian Government had warned Austria of the risk and danger. With splendid, if somewhat insolent, courage he had come, he had seen, he had died with his consort. But to imagine that the death of this Austrian archduke, whose name was scarcely known in Brussels, was the reason why Prussian armies four weeks later invaded Belgium is to give up the search for historical causes. Is it for his sake, to keep this proud and lonely ghost company, that over 4,000,000 men have gone to their graves? Is it because of him in any sense that over 2,000,000 Americans have crossed the

seas and in desperate combat faced the Germans on the flats of Flanders, the plains of Picardy, and the hills of the Woëvre and of the Vosges? To believe this is to deny that the wills and desires of men or nations play any part on this world's stage. It would be sacrilegious to every ideal of liberty and justice to entertain the thought that this is all, and that for this only any single citizen had been called from his peaceful pursuits and sent from his shop or his field to fight, perchance to die, in an unknown land. This act was done by those opposed to Germany; and so, to say this was "the challenge" would suggest that the opponents of Germany were the more ready and anxious for the duel. The true cause of the war is much simpler than this. The true cause of the war is the fact that the powers in Germany which could make war desired ardently to do so, and therefore seized upon this assassination, as a German Socialist expressed it, as a "gift from heaven." Their desire for war is evident from the previous chapters. It is now possible to show the stages by which they transferred this desire into action.

Let us turn for a moment to the protagonists in this great drama.

The archduke had been the friend of Kaiser William II. How was the latter to receive the news? Let us take the account of a careful if interested witness, Baron Beyens, the Belgian minister at Berlin:

"All eyes were turned toward Kiel, where the fatal news reached William II. while he was taking part in a yacht race on board his own clipper. He turned pale, and was heard to murmur: 'So my work of the past twenty-five years will have to be started all over again!' Enigmatic words, which may be interpreted in various ways! To the British ambassador, who was also at Kiel, with the British squadron returning from the Baltic, he unburdened himself in more explicit fashion: '*Es ist ein Verbrechen gegen das Deutschtum.*' By this he probably meant that Germany, feeling her own interests assailed by the Serajevo crime, would make common cause with Austria to exact a full retribution. With more self-control than usual, however, he abstained from all further public utterances on the subject." *

"It is a crime against *Deutschtum.*" We have already seen that the Emperor was con-

* "Germany Before the War," p. 276.

vinced that war with France was inevitable, and the statement of Mr. Jordan shows that a large party in Germany desired such a war in the interest of *Deutschtum*, and regardless of the Balkans. This was the view of the General Staff, and the Kaiser, as we saw, was, on essentials at least, in accord with General von Moltke. Was the time favorable for the "inevitable" stroke?

Russia was in no condition to make war. Austria and Germany were convinced of this. It was the expressed opinion of the Austrian ambassador at Berlin and the German ambassador at Vienna. France was in the hands of unpatriotic radicals, and the Minister of War had confessed that the army was poorly supplied. Reports from London seemed to prove that England would not enter the conflict, and she seemed, furthermore, on the verge of civil war over the Irish question. So favorable a juncture of circumstances could hardly occur again. Either Russia and France would have to stand aside in humiliation while Germany and Austria forced their way to the east through Serbia and realized Middle Europe or, if they

refused to accept such humiliation and offered resistance, the score could now very advantageously be settled and Germany's two European rivals be rendered harmless for the future.

Americans have often insisted on the German inability to understand the psychology of other peoples. Let us not fall into the same error and fail to understand the psychology of the Germans. They are a different people, nationalistic and imperialistic, who believe in the superiority of *Deutschtum*. Their young men have not been trained to honor and respect a Washington or a Lincoln, who would sacrifice all and even themselves in the interest of truth, of justice, of humanity. Their national heroes, the men they are taught to revere, were men of force, who succeeded through deceit. Bismarck, who boasted of having brought on a successful war through suppression of the truth, is their Lincoln. Frederick the Great wrote from the camp at Mollwitz to his minister, de Podervils: "If there is anything to be gained by it, we will be honest; if deception is necessary, let us be cheats."* Frederick the

* Letter dated May 12, 1741. *Cf.* also J. B. Scott, "A Survey," pp. xxii *et seq.*

Great is their Washington. Professor Adolf Lasson, one of their greatest and most honored teachers of international law, tells them: "The state breaking a treaty enters into a state of war; it acts unwisely whenever it challenges a decision through the force of arms, unless it is sure of its superior force. If it has this force, then it may do whatever it pleases; for between states the right of the strong alone prevails. . . . The weaker is, in spite of any and all treaties, the prey of the stronger, whenever the latter wills to and can prey upon it." Instead, therefore, of being shocked to find that a great state like Germany should deliberately stoop to violence and fraud, we should rather expect it, and instead of granting ready belief to her excuses we must weigh them with care. In the process of doing so we shall arrive at far different conceptions of the origin of the war than those which prevailed in the early period of our neutrality, and we shall perhaps be forced to agree with Doctor Dernberg (for a time the Kaiser's personal agent in America) and Doctor Delbrück when, in their petition printed in *Deutsche Politik* for September 28, 1917, they proclaim in sorrow:

"Our lies are coarse and improbable, our ambiguity is pitiful simplicity, and our intrigues are without salt and without grace."

Let us consider the problem as it presented itself to the Kaiser and his staff. The time had come when Germany could secure cheaply and with promising chances of success either a great diplomatic triumph or a swift military victory which would establish her pre-eminence in Europe. Her own army had recently been increased to a point beyond which she could hardly hope to go. Her enemies, Russia and France, were in poor case. There could, therefore, be no question of the issue if the system of alliance which she had built up could be forced to move. Here was a chance for a war which Austria ardently desired, and it was rather doubtful whether she could be made to co-operate fully in any future action directed merely or primarily against France. If Italy, which did not look with favor on Serbia's desire to reach the Adriatic, would co-operate, and especially if England, which wanted peace, would stand aside, the great stakes would be swiftly won. Italy was a partner

with Austria and Germany in the Triple Alliance. She was bound to co-operate only in a defensive war, and one to which England was not a party (for in that case her coasts would be open to the British fleet).

The one element at home whose enthusiasm it was desirable to enlist was the Social-Democratic party. This could be done if the war, which was to be provoked, could be made to appear defensive in character. The aim of her diplomatic manœuvres was, therefore, to provoke a war in which—

1. Italy would join her.
2. England would remain neutral,
3. The Social-Democrats would be with the government.

How could this end be accomplished?

It would be ridiculous for Austria to make a war on little Serbia, and claim that it was defensive. It could be accomplished, however, if Russia could be made the scapegoat and made to appear the aggressor. The menace of czarism would have a powerful effect upon the masses in Germany. Therefore, plans must be laid to locate the blame in Saint Petersburg.

One of two things would therefore be certain. Austria could safely be allowed to make war on Serbia and reduce her to the position of a vassal state. The frontier of the Central Empires could then start moving southward through the Balkans toward the east, like a creeping barrage, and Middle Europe would be on the way to realization. This in itself would be a large step toward achieving the supremacy of *Deutschtum*, and would seriously impair the power and prestige of Russia and France. The push must now be made, and if Russia, as seemed highly probable, became involved, the blame must be cast upon her. Austria and Germany had the great advantage in the subsequent diplomatic contest of knowing exactly their objectives, and the possibilities were very probably rehearsed, and the moves in the diplomatic game played out in advance.

Accordingly, to meet the situation Austria would have to issue an ultimatum in terms so harsh that Serbia could not possibly accept it. A time limit must be set, so short that there would be no possibility that the ambassadors of the Powers, who were away on their summer

vacations, could return and act in effective concert. If any extension of this time limit were asked for it must be refused, as it was refused when Sazanoff asked for it.* If any attempt were made to refer the matter to the Hague Tribunal it must be rejected. Such a proposal was, in fact, made by Serbia with her acceptance of most of the conditions of the Austrian ultimatum.† Again, on July 29, the Czar himself, in a personal telegram to the Kaiser, proposed that the Austro-Serbian problem be given over to the Hague Tribunal. This was awkward, indeed, for how could one make the Czar the aggressor after this? Any reference to this telegram had, therefore, to be omitted from the memorial submitted to the Reichstag by Von Bethmann-Hollweg.

Any attempt of the disinterested Powers to mediate must be rejected. England made this proposal, Italy and France willingly acceded, but when Germany was asked to unite with them in mediation she refused.‡

* "British Blue Book," No. 13, and "Russian Orange Book," No. 4.

† Reply of Serbian Government to the Austro-Hungarian note. "Serbian Blue Book," No. 39.

‡ "British Blue Book," Nos. 36 and 84; "German White Book," No. 15.

If Germany were called upon to formulate some counter-proposal she must decline to do so, and she did decline when Edward Grey, after Germany's refusal to accept the mediation of the four Powers, asked that she suggest any other plan.*

Germany would be willing only to propose direct negotiations between Russia and Austria. Previous understanding had very probably been reached between Austria and Germany that Austria would refuse to yield.† When later it appeared that England would stand by France and Russia, and that Italy would not join the Triple Alliance, Austria hesitated, and when the Russian foreign minister made his second proposal, on July 31, to allow the great Powers to examine the Serbian satisfactions, Austria seemed inclined to yield, but by that time the matter was already far beyond her control, and the German council of war, held in Potsdam on the evening of July 29,

* "British Blue Book," No. 84.

† England, France, and Russia agreed to accept any mediation proposals made by Germany and Austria which would preserve peace. *Cf.* "British Blue Book," Nos. 78, 84, and 111; "French Yellow Book," No. 86; "Russian Orange Book," No. 64.

had already decided to make war on France and Russia. The German Government was waiting now only for a pretext.

To carry out such a plan, a diplomatic campaign of indirection would certainly be necessary. It is now possible to show, from German testimony, that the German Government had recourse to such indirection throughout the course of its negotiations.

While the world was still under the shock of the suddenness under which the catastrophe came, historians sought eagerly for an explanation in the various white, yellow, and blue papers, published by the different governments, and especially in the White Paper published by Germany, which curiously enough had been prepared and was ready for issue before the war was really under way, on August 3. If we would correctly fix the responsibility for the war, however, we must look to other sources.

From the first Germany was to pretend that she knew nothing about the Austrian ultimatum. Her ambassadors were all instructed to make this statement, and it was repeated by Lichnowsky at London, who received a special

telegram from the government; by Schoen in Paris, and by Von Jagow, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs himself, at Berlin. So frequently was this reiterated that so careful a historian as Mr. Stowell was willing to accept the German statement, in spite of its inherent improbability, for according to the terms of the Triple Alliance, every member is bound to lay before its allies any diplomatic matters which may involve the alliance. Indeed, so well was this understood that in 1913, when Austria had been tempted to take the same action, she laid her proposals for aggressive action against Serbia before both Italy and Germany. If Austria and Germany did not lay them before Italy in 1914 it was only because they had been convinced by Italy's reply in 1913 that she would never admit that such action against Serbia could possibly be defensive in character or bind her to co-operation. If, however, Austria and Germany succeeded in making Russia appear as the aggressor, they hoped possibly to enlist Italian co-operation. It should have struck historians as little short of amazing that two of the partners in the Triple Alliance could go so far

without consulting the third, and that in the Austrian and German official papers Italy should scarcely be mentioned. The reason for this curious and significant omission was made plain by the statement of Signor Giolitti, the former Italian premier, in the Italian Chamber of Deputies, on December 5, 1914. The Marquis of San Giuliano referred to was Minister for Foreign Affairs in Signor Giolitti's cabinet.

"I feel it my duty to recall a precedent showing how correct was the interpretation of the alliance by the Government when the conflict began. During the Balkan War, on August 9, 1913, being absent from Rome, I received the following telegram from the late Marquis di San Giuliano: 'Austria has communicated to us and Germany that it has been the intention to act against Serbia, defining such action as defensive and hoping for an application of a *casus fœderis* by the Triple Alliance, which I consider inapplicable. I am trying to agree with Germany concerning efforts to prevent Austrian action, but it may be necessary to say clearly that we do not consider such eventful action as defensive, and, therefore, do not think that there exists a *casus fœderis*. Please send a telegram saying whether you approve.'

"I answered Marquis di San Giuliano thus: 'If Austria goes against Serbia, a *casus fœderis*

evidently does not exist. It is an action she accomplished on her own account. It is not defensive, because nobody thinks of attacking her. It is necessary to declare this to Austria in the most formal manner, hoping that Germany will act to dissuade Austria from a very dangerous adventure.'

"This was done, and our interpretation of the treaty was accepted by our allies, our friendly relations not being in the least disturbed. Thus the declaration of neutrality, made at the beginning of this conflict, is according to the spirit and letter of the treaties. I recall this incident, wishing to demonstrate the complete loyalty of Italy before the eyes of Europe." *

If this collusion between the Austrian and German cabinets can be proved, the insincerity of their entire procedure is evident, and it is no longer necessary to consider their attempted justifications which were issued merely in the attempt to hoodwink their allies and a part of their own population.

Let us see what actually happened. We know from Ambassador Gerard, who was present at Kiel, that the Emperor left hurriedly for Berlin on June 28. Very shortly after he sent

* *Cf.* Stowell, "The Diplomacy of the War of 1914," pp. 470–1.

telegrams to some of his ambassadors, certainly to Baron von Wangenheim, at Constantinople, and in all probability to Tschirschky at Vienna, calling them to a conference at Potsdam on July 5. In addition there were present Moltke, then chief of staff, Admiral von Tirpitz, and some of the great bankers, railroad directors, and captains of industry, all of whose services would have to be called upon in case of war. What happened we know from the words of Henry Morgenthau, formerly United States ambassador to Turkey:

"Wangenheim now told me that the Kaiser solemnly put the question to each man in turn: Was he ready for war? All replied 'Yes' except the financiers. They said that they must have two weeks to sell their foreign securities and to make loans.

"In telling me about this conference Wangenheim, of course, admitted that Germany had precipitated the war. I think that he was rather proud of the whole performance; proud that Germany had gone about the matter in so methodical and farseeing a way; especially proud that he himself had been invited to participate in so momentous a gathering. The several blue, red, and yellow books which flooded Europe the few months following the outbreak,

and the hundreds of documents which were issued by German propaganda attempting to establish Germany's innocence, never made any impression on me. For my conclusions as to the responsibility are not based on suspicions or belief or the study of circumstantial data. I do not have to reason or argue about the matter. I know." *

It is probable that Helfferich and Krupp von Bohlen were among those present, also that Von Jagow, who was so loud in his protestations of ignorance, though probably not present, knew all that had happened. Helfferich and Krupp von Bohlen certainly did. This we have learned only recently from Doctor Mühlon, a man formerly of the highest social and business standing in Germany, who up to the outbreak of the war was a director in Krupp's. The dishonesty of the German procedure, and the thorough unreliability of the German leaders and the unrighteousness of

* "Ambassador Morgenthau's Story," *World's Work*, June, 1918, pp. 170–1. Wangenheim told his friend, the Italian ambassador, Signor Garroni, on his return to his post, July 15, 1914, that the conference he had attended had decided on a European war. When Signor Garroni asked what the provocation was to be, Wangenheim replied that Austria was to make demands on Serbia that would surely lead to war. Signor Garroni reported this officially to his government. (*Cf.* New York *Nation*, September 6, 1917.) Signor Garroni also informed Mr. Einstein, a member of our legation, who recorded it in his diary at the time. (*Cf.* London *Times*, August 4, 1917.)

their course, impressed him so strongly that he resigned his position with Krupp's, and refused for a long time to take any active part in what Germany was doing, except such as might tend toward reconciliation and the establishment of peace. It was he who before Roumania's entrance into the war was chosen by Von Bethmann-Hollweg to conduct the negotiations with that country, which were to bring food-supplies into Germany. After the declaration of unrestrained submarine warfare he became so completely out of sympathy with the German cause that he left for Switzerland, from which country, of his own accord, he issued the following statement:

"In the middle of July, 1914, I had, as I frequently had, a conversation with Dr. Helfferich, then director of the Deutsche Bank in Berlin, and now Vice-Chancellor. The Deutsche Bank had adopted a negative attitude toward certain large transactions in Bulgaria and Turkey, in which the firm of Krupp, for business reasons—delivery of material—had a lively interest. As one of the reasons to justify the attitude of the Deutsche Bank, Dr. Helfferich gave me among others the following reason:—

" 'The political situation has become very menacing. The Deutsche Bank must in any

case wait before entering into any further engagements abroad. The Austrians have just been with the Kaiser. In a week's time Vienna will send a very severe ultimatum to Serbia, with a very short interval for the answer. The ultimatum will contain demands: such as punishment of a number of officers, dissolution of political associations, criminal investigations in Serbia by Austrian officials, and, in fact, a whole series of definite satisfactions will be demanded at once; otherwise Austria-Hungary will declare war on Serbia.'

"Dr. Helfferich added that the Kaiser had expressed his decided approval of this procedure on the part of Austria-Hungary. He had said that he regarded a conflict with Serbia as an internal affair between these two countries, in which he would permit no other state to interfere. If Russia mobilized, he would mobilize also. But in this case mobilization meant immediate war. This time there would be no hesitation. Helfferich said that the Austrians were extremely well satisfied at this determined attitude on the part of the Kaiser.

"When I thereupon said to Dr. Helfferich that this uncanny communication converted my fears of a world-war, which were already strong, into absolute certainty, he replied that it certainly looked like that. But perhaps France and Russia would reconsider the matter. In any case the Serbs deserved a lesson which they would remember. This was the first intimation that I had received about the Kaiser's discus-

sions with our Allies. I knew Dr. Helfferich's particularly intimate relations with the personages who were sure to be initiated, and I knew that this communication was trustworthy.

"After my return from Berlin I informed Herr Krupp von Bohlen and Halbach, one of whose directors I then was at Essen. Helfferich had, furthermore, explicitly authorized me to do so. At that time the intention was to make him a director of Krupp's. Von Bohlen seemed disturbed that Dr. Helfferich was in possession of such information, and he made an unfavorable remark about the members of the Government who could not keep their mouth shut. He then told me the following. He said that he had himself been with the Kaiser in the last few days. The Kaiser had spoken to him also of his conversation with the Austrians, and of its result; but he had described the matter as so secret that he (Krupp) would not even have dared to inform his own directors. As, however, I already knew, he could tell me that Helfferich's statements were accurate. Indeed, Helfferich seemed to know more details than he did. He said that the situation was really very serious. The Kaiser had told him that he would declare war immediately if Russia mobilized, and that this time people would see that he did not turn about. The Kaiser's repeated insistence that this time nobody would be able to accuse him of indecision had, he said, been almost comic in its effect. It was exactly on the day that

Helfferich had indicated to me, that the ultimatum of Serbia appeared. I was at this time in Berlin, and I indicated to Helfferich that I found the tone and the contents of the ultimatum really monstrous. Dr. Helfferich replied that this appeared so only in the German translation, that he had had under his eyes the ultimatum in French and that one could not consider it as at all exaggerated. On this occasion Helfferich also told me that the Emperor had undertaken his trip to the north only to save appearances, that he had not given it its usual extension, but that he had always remained sufficiently near, so that he could be reached and so that permanent communication could be maintained with him. We would now have to see what would happen. It was to be hoped that the Austrians, who did not expect an acceptance of the ultimatum, would act quickly, before the other powers had had the time to discuss it. The Deutsche Bank had already taken precautions to meet all eventualities. It had ceased to return to circulation the gold which came in. They were believed to do it in a manner altogether discreet, and this brought in every day considerable sums.

"Immediately after the ultimatum of Vienna to Serbia, the German Government made declarations saying that Austria-Hungary had acted by itself unknown to Germany. When we try to reconcile these declarations with the facts given above, there is only one explanation,—that

the Emperor had already engaged himself without allowing his Government to collaborate, and that at the time of the interview with the Austrians they had renounced on the German side to agree upon the text of the ultimatum, for I have already shown that the contents of the ultimatum was quite accurately known in Germany.

"Mr. Krupp von Bohlen, with whom I spoke upon these lying declarations at least with regard to their effect, showed himself likewise but little edified because Germany in an affair as serious ought not to have given full power to a state like Austria-Hungary. . . . In short, Mr. von Bohlen considered the German affirmation of ignorance as a fault against the rudiments of diplomacy, and he told me that he would speak in this regard to Mr. von Jagow, then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, who was one of his intimate friends.

"As a result of this interview Mr. von Bohlen told me that Mr. von Jagow had affirmed to him again that he had not collaborated on the text of the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum and that Germany had furthermore not formulated such a demand. To the objection that this was incomprehensible, Mr. von Jagow replied that as a diplomat he had naturally thought of asking it, but at the moment when Mr. von Jagow was called to give the matter his attention, the Emperor had already engaged himself to such a point that it was too late for diplomatic action, and there was nothing further to do. The situation presented itself in such a

way that one could no longer modify the clauses of the ultimatum. Finally he (Jagow) thought that the omission would also have its good side, that the good impression which one could make from the German side at St. Petersburg and at Paris, through declaring that we had not collaborated in the Vienna ultimatum."*

What, then, was the understanding with Austria? We cannot tell exactly, but her general intentions are plain from the statement made by the Austrian ambassador at Constantinople to our own ambassador.

"The Austrian Ambassador, the Marquis Pallavicini, also practically admitted that the Central Powers had precipitated the war. On August 18th, Francis Joseph's birthday, I made the usual ambassadorial visit of congratulation. Quite naturally the conversation turned upon the Emperor, who had that day passed his 84th year. Pallavicini spoke about him with the utmost pride and veneration. He told me how keen-minded and clear-headed the aged Emperor was, how he had the most complete understanding of international affairs, and gave everything his personal supervision. To illustrate the Austrian Kaiser's grasp of public events, Pallavicini instanced the present war. The previous May, Palla-

* Translated from *L'Humanité* (Paris), Mars 26, 1917.

vicini had had an audience with Francis Joseph in Vienna. At that time, Pallavicini told me, the Emperor had said that a European war was unavoidable. The Central Powers would not accept the Treaty of Bucharest as a settlement of the Balkan question, and only a general war, the Emperor had told Pallavicini, could ever settle that problem. The Treaty of Bucharest, I may recall, was the settlement that ended the second Balkan war. This divided the European dominions of the Balkan States, excepting Constantinople and a small piece of adjoining territory, among the Balkan nations, chiefly Serbia and Greece. That treaty strengthened Serbia greatly; so much did it increase Serbia's resources, indeed, that Austria feared that it had laid the beginning of a new European state that might grow sufficiently strong to resist her own plans of aggrandizement. Austria held a large Serbian population under her yoke in Bosnia and Herzegovina; these Serbians desired, above everything else, annexation to their own country. Moreover, the Pan-German plans in the East necessitated the destruction of Serbia, the state, which, so long as it stood intact, blocked the Germanic road to the East. It had been the Austro-German expectation that the Balkan War would destroy Serbia as a nation—that Turkey would simply annihilate King Peter's forces. This was precisely what the Germanic plans demanded, and for this reason Austria and Germany did nothing to prevent the Balkan wars. But the

result was exactly the reverse; out of the conflict arose a stronger Serbia than ever, standing firm like a breakwater against the Germanic path. Most historians agree that the Treaty of Bucharest made inevitable this war. I have the Marquis Pallavicini's evidence that this was likewise the opinion of Francis Joseph himself. The audience at which the Emperor made this statement was held in May, more than a month before the assassination of the Grand Duke. Clearly, therefore, the war would have come irrespective of the calamity at Serajevo. That merely served as the convenient pretext for the war upon which the Central Empires had already decided."*

It is not necessary to assume with the German author of "J'Accuse" that the crown prince and General Staff forced the Kaiser into war. The Kaiser's remark at Kiel, "It is a crime against *Deutschtum*," is significant, and to understand his subsequent course of action it is merely necessary to remember that he was an irresponsible and hot-headed monarch, who, as we have seen above, was able to go ahead without consulting even his own ministers.

Emperor William II had been particularly friendly to the murdered archduke, Francis

* Henry Morgenthau, *World's Work*, June, 1918, pp. 171–2.

Ferdinand; and to one hereditary autocrat the murder of another, as the Kaiser explained to the Czar in his telegram of July 28, is a serious matter. It is, furthermore, more than probable that after the Austrian attempt against Serbia in 1913, and with Franz Joseph's disposition, as revealed by Pallavicini, the Central Powers had already planned aggressive action in the Balkans, and were merely waiting for an occasion. Indeed, the Kaiser and Francis Ferdinand had had a meeting at Konapisht less than a month before the tragedy of Serajevo, and it is likely that the archduke's fatal journey had some connection with important plans in the interest of *Deutschtum*. That conference, which has often been overlooked, is probably crucial in the history of the war. What happened there is now known only to William II, but it is well to ponder carefully the statement of Savic, who says: "At this fatal meeting a compact was entered into, under which the map of Central Europe was to be transformed and the peace of the world was doomed." *

* V. R. Savic, "Southwestern Europe," p. 111. Prince Lichnowsky refers to the conference at Konapisht as something unquestioned. See his statement below.

This would explain the Kaiser's remark at Kiel after the murder of Francis Ferdinand that it meant not only the death of a friend and prospective allied ruler (Francis Joseph was nearly eighty-four), but the endangering of whatever plans had been made.

The Kaiser had already shown to what a degree of belligerency he could be moved at the time of the expedition to China. He returned to Berlin from Kiel in much the same frame of mind. Serbia must be chastised in the interests of *Deutschtum*, even if, as seemed probable, Russia and France should be drawn in—for if there were to be war only against Serbia there was no need of the Potsdam war conference at all.

Germany was ready. There is a German proverb: When you want to hang a dog you can always find a rope with which to hang him. The assassination of the archduke was to be used for the execution of Serbia, for which preparations had already been under way. The unusual military measures taken by Germany before June, 1914, her buying of hospital and munition supplies, her embargo on the

shipment of pneumatic tires, etc., tend to confirm this.*

But in spite of the seeming clearness of the evidence historians should be critical of the intentions attributed by belligerents to their enemies especially in this most crucial matter of the responsibility for the war. No question at issue can interest us Americans, lovers of peace, more deeply than this or have more serious bearing on our plans for the future and that world peace which from the first our country and our President have desired.

We have seen how German and Austrian ambassadors like Wangenheim and Pallavicini, in the early days of what promised to be for them a successful war, gloried in the fact that their countries had provoked it. Perhaps, however, their patriotism led them to give their countries credit which they did not deserve. Some years have now intervened and the time has come when we can consult other wings of responsible and informed opinion in Germany.

Let us consider first the final conclusions of Doctor Mühlon, whose position in the social

* "Le Mensonge du 3 Août," p. 9.

and industrial world brought him close to the leaders of Germany. It was not one at which he arrived hastily or through any personal pique, and he gave it of his own motion to the *Journal de Genève*, where it appeared on May 2, 1917.

"The essential points of my statement have been known for a long time, and the German government has not denied them. They are:

"I. That, according to the German point of view, Austria-Hungary was to chastise Serbia without a third power having the right to intervene.

"II. That the Russian mobilization would have as its immediate consequence the declaration of war of Germany. . . .

"What is perhaps new in my statement is that I show that the attitude of the Emperor in person was resolutely fixed in the direction of the two points of view mentioned above. Whoever was familiar at that time with circumstances in Germany could not doubt that the Emperor in person would take a strong stand on the question. . . .

"The facts alone are important. Mobilization did not necessarily mean war, and the Austrians knew it better than anyone, they who were used to long mobilizations that did not imply war.

"There may have been in this world war a considerable number who were guilty in the

broad sense of the word, and for a long time back, but of guilty persons in the strict sense of the word, there is only a small number, and when we consider the events recounted, we see that they were orly in Berlin and Vienna."

The surest measure of the sincerity of a man's views is his willingness to suffer for them. Doctor Mühlon voluntarily gave up his distinguished position and his native land and removed to Switzerland in order to be free to speak the truth as he knew it. Of his sincerity there can, therefore, be no doubt. But some one may say, he may, in spite of his connections, not have been well informed.

Before, therefore, finally making the most serious accusations against Germany and taxing her with bad faith in her diplomacy and with the responsibility for the greatest war in history, let us call up, even at the risk of appearing tedious, one last witness of whose competence there can be no question. Prince Lichnowsky was the German ambassador in England from 1912 to the outbreak of the war, and he therefore held one of the most important diplomatic posts of his country. His testimony

is the more impressive, since he wrote not for his own time but sought to set down for his family archives a record that would be read and scrutinized in the light of all the facts by men who would call these times ancient. Through the indiscretion or treachery of an acquaintance they were published prematurely and their author acknowledged them. We reprint the sections that bear most directly on this momentous question.

"On board the *Meteor* we learned of the death of the archducal heir to the throne. His Majesty regretted that his efforts to win that prince's support for his ideas had thus been rendered vain. Whether the plan of an active policy against Serbia had already been decided on at Konopischt, I am not in a position to know.

"As I was not kept posted regarding views and proceedings in Vienna, I did not attach very great importance to this event. All that I could ascertain later was that among Austrian aristocrats a feeling of relief outweighed other sentiments. On board the *Meteor*, also as a guest of His Majesty, was an Austrian, Count Felix Thun. In spite of the splendid weather, he had remained in his cabin all the time, suffering from sea-sickness. After receiving the news, however, he was well. Alarm or joy had cured him. . . .

"Subsequently I learned that, at the decisive conference at Potsdam on July 5th, the Vienna inquiry received the unqualified assent of all the controlling authorities, with the further suggestion that it would not be a bad thing if war with Russia should result. At least this statement was made in the Austrian protocol which Count Mensdorff (Austrian ambassador) received in London. . . .

"It would, of course, have required only a hint from Berlin to induce Count Berchtold to content himself with a diplomatic success and quietly accept the Serbian answer. This hint, however, was not given. On the contrary, pressure was exercised in favor of war. It would have been so fine a success.

"After our refusal Sir Edward Grey begged us to come forward with a proposal of our own. We insisted on war.

"The impression grew continually stronger that we desired war under any circumstances. In no other way was it possible to interpret our attitude on a question which, after all, did not directly concern us. The urgent requests and explicit declarations of M. Sazonof, followed by the Czar's positively humble telegrams; the repeated proposals of Sir Edward Grey; the warnings of Marquis di San Giuliano and of Signor Bollati; my own urgent counsels—all were of no avail. Berlin would not budge; Serbia must be massacred. . . .

"Soon after this events were precipitated. Until this time, following the directions he re-

ceived from Berlin, Count Berchtold had played the part of the strong man. When at last he decided to change his course, and after Russia had negotiated and waited a whole week in vain, we answered the Russian mobilization with the ultimatum and the declaration of war. . . .

"It is shown by all official publications and is not disproved by our White Book, which, owing to the poverty of its contents and to its omissions, constitutes a grave indictment against ourselves, that:

"1. We encouraged Count Berchtold to attack Serbia, although no German interest was involved, and the danger of a World War must have been known to us. Whether we were acquainted with the wording of the ultimatum is completely immaterial.

"2. During the period between the 23d and the 30th of July, 1914, when M. Sazonof emphatically declared that he could not tolerate an attack on Serbia, we rejected the British proposals of mediation, although Serbia, under Russian and British pressure, had accepted almost the whole of the ultimatum, and although an agreement about the two points at issue could easily have been reached and Count Berchtold was even prepared to content himself with the Serbian reply.

"3. On the 30th of July, when Count Berchtold showed a disposition to change his course, we sent an ultimatum to St. Petersburg merely because of the Russian mobilization, and though

Austria had not been attacked; and on the 31st of July we declared war against the Russians, although the Czar pledged his word that he would not permit a single man to march as long as negotiations were still going on. Thus we deliberately destroyed the possibility of a peaceful settlement.

"In view of these incontestable facts, it is no wonder that the whole civilized world outside of Germany places the sole responsibility for the World War upon our shoulders."*

In this spirit the rulers of Germany, the Kaiser and the military party, were acting, and in accordance with it the Imperial German Chancellor, on August 1, 1914, instructed the German ambassador at Petrograd to submit a statement which, after attributing all the blame to Russia, declared a state of war with that country.

On the 3d of August Baron von Schoen, German ambassador at Paris, submitted a declaration of war against France,† also alleging that French aviators had violated Belgian territory (this to prepare the world for the German invasion), and that one of them had tried to de-

* American Association for International Conciliation, "The Disclosures from Germany," June, 1918, pp. 321–343.

† "French Yellow Book," No. 147.

stroy establishments near Wesel. (The instructions from Berlin to Schoen had made this more definite and plausible, and had ordered him to say that this aviator had been shot down at the railroad-station at Wesel!) This statement could have been very easily verified by a photograph, the name of the aviator, who must have been either killed or captured, or by the wrecked aeroplane. France denied it categorically and has proved it untrue. Schoen's statement further alleged that another had dropped bombs on the railroad near Karlsruhe and Nuremberg. This statement, after circulating for two years, was denied by the municipal authorities of Nuremberg in the following terms:

"The commandant *ad interim* of the III Bavarian Army Corps has no knowledge that on the railroad Nuremberg-Kissengen and Nuremberg-Ansbach before or after the outbreak of war bombs by enemy aviators were ever dropped. All statements and newspaper reports in this connection have proved themselves false."*

After oblique diplomacy a lying declaration of war. This was Germany's course. But the

* *Cf.* "Le Mensonge du 3 Août," pp. 123–242.

false statements could not be immediately controlled. Some of the German statesmen themselves may have believed them at the time. In any case it was thought that the war would be over before they could be disproved, and that success which, in Von Moltke's phrase, "alone justifies war," would make later discussion superfluous. By her disingenuous attempt to make Russia and France appear the aggressors, we have seen that Germany had hoped to bring Italy to her side, and induce England to remain neutral. In both these attempts she failed. She did succeed, however, in uniting her population and bringing all classes enthusiastically into the war.

It was after this fashion, therefore, that in the language of William II, "the sword had been forced" into his hand.

CHAPTER IV

STRICT NEUTRALITY

"IN the wars of the European Powers in matters relating to themselves we have never taken any part, nor does it comport with our policy to do so." These words in President Monroe's historic message of December 2, 1823, had become by 1914 a national habit of thought. It was inevitable, therefore, that when the Powers of Europe were declaring war upon each other we should have taken our stand on the basis of old principles. We were bewildered and confused. The affairs in the Balkans had interested us but little. There had, to be sure, been rumors of war, but we had not believed that war would really come. We were too little acquainted with the new Prussia, and too much under the spell of the old Germany to be able to believe that any nation in these days would deliberately provoke war. To us it seemed at first like a force of nature, a cata-

clysm. It is with nations as with individuals; in a sudden crisis they decide on the principle of their former reiterated decisions—on their precedents. Accordingly, on August 4, 1914, President Wilson proclaimed America neutral in the war between Austria and Serbia, Germany and Russia, and Germany and France. Similar proclamations of neutrality were to be made as other nations entered the war, and the word "neutrality" was to characterize our attitude to the date of our own entrance into the conflict.

Our policy was, therefore, in every sense in full accord with our history. We had promptly assumed the attitude which Washington and his advisers had formulated in the wars of the French Revolution. "This policy of 1793," in the opinion of a distinguished English authority, "constitutes an epoch in the development of the usages of neutrality." It represents the most advanced existing opinions of what neutral obligations were, and "in some points it went further than authoritative international custom has up to the present time advanced." *

* Hall's "International Law," 4th edition, 1895, p. 616; quoted by James Brown Scott, "A Survey of International Relations Between the United States and Germany," p. 45.

The Monroe Doctrine made it natural that we should revert to this policy, and our neutrality was, therefore, not something new, strange, or unfamiliar to the nations. It was the conscientious policy of Washington, with such additions as subsequent experience had suggested. It was, as James Scott Brown clearly describes it, "the neutrality which recognized belligerent duties as well as neutral rights, and which, by apt laws, sought to prevent assaults upon neutral rights and to compel the performance of neutral duties." *

Yet it was not to be a purely passive neutrality. It was to be, if we dare put it paradoxically, a neutrality benevolent to both sides. For we imagined that, like ourselves, the belligerents, too, looked upon war as a great calamity and that all parties would welcome serious effort on our part to bring back peace and justice. Until we ourselves were forced into the conflict, this was to be the aim of our government. The proposal for a world peace offered by President Wilson on January 22, 1917, was the last act in a policy which he had doubtless had in

* J. B. Scott, "A Survey of International Relations Between the United States and Germany," p. 45.

mind from the outset. For this reason, on August 19, 1914, he issued to the American people the following proclamation:

"My fellow countrymen: I suppose that every thoughtful man in America has asked himself, during these last troubled weeks, what influence the European War may exert upon the United States, and I take the liberty of addressing a few words to you in order to point out that it is entirely within our own choice what its effects upon us will be, and to urge very earnestly upon you the sort of speech and conduct which will best safeguard the nation against distress and disaster.

"The effect of the war upon the United States will depend upon what American citizens say and do. Every man who really loves America will act and speak in the true spirit of neutrality, which is the spirit of impartiality and fairness and friendliness to all concerned. The spirit of the nation in this critical matter will be determined largely by what individuals and society and those gathered in public meetings do and say, upon what newspapers and magazines contain, upon what ministers utter in their pulpits, and men proclaim as their opinions on the street.

"The people of the United States are drawn from many nations, and chiefly from the nations now at war. It is natural and inevitable that there should be the utmost variety of sympathy and desire among them with regard to

the issues and circumstances of the conflict. Some will wish one nation, others another, to succeed in the momentous struggle. It will be easy to excite passion and difficult to allay it. Those responsible for exciting it will assume a heavy responsibility, responsibility for no less a thing than that the people of the United States, whose love of their country and whose loyalty to its government should unite them as Americans all, bound in honor and affection to think first of her and her interests, may be divided in camps of hostile opinion, hot against each other, involved in the war itself in impulse and opinion if not in action.

"Such divisions among us would be fatal to our peace of mind and might seriously stand in the way of the proper *performance of our duty as the one great nation at peace, the one people holding itself ready to play a part of impartial mediation and speak the counsels of peace and accommodation, not as a partisan, but as a friend.*

"I venture, therefore, my fellow countrymen, to speak a solemn word of warning to you against that deepest, most subtle, most essential breach of neutrality which may spring out of partisanship, out of passionately taking sides. The United States must be neutral in fact as well as in name during these days that are to try men's souls. We must be impartial in thought as well as in action, must put a curb upon our sentiments as well as upon every transaction that might be construed as a preference of one party to the struggle before another.

"My thought is of America. I am speaking,

I feel sure, the earnest wish and purpose of every thoughtful American that this great country of ours, which is, of course, the first in our thoughts and in our hearts, should show herself in this time of peculiar trial a nation fit beyond others to exhibit the fine poise of undisturbed judgment, the dignity of self-control, the efficiency of dispassionate action; a nation that neither sits in judgment upon others nor is disturbed in her own counsels and which keeps herself fit and free to do what is honest and disinterested and truly serviceable for the peace of the world.

"Shall we not resolve to put upon ourselves the restraints which will bring to our people the happiness *and the great and lasting influence for peace we covet for them?*"*

It is important for those who would understand the steps which brought the war to our doors to remember this initial act of our President. America, in the interest of all, was to be the peacemaker. Nothing could have better shown our friendly disposition toward all parties

* This proclamation was evidently issued after careful reflection on our relations to the World War in general. Belgium had already been invaded and the German chancellor had announced the violation of the treaty guaranteeing Belgium's neutrality. It would appear as if this had at first given us pause, for our proclamations declaring neutrality between various belligerents were dated as follows: Austria-Hungary and Serbia, Germany and Russia, Germany and France, August 4; Germany and Great Britain, August 5; Austria-Hungary and Russia, August 7; Great Britain and Austria-Hungary, August 13; France and

to the conflict. No one could have been more determined to keep our own country at peace than were the representatives of the American people in 1914. The policy they had outlined was to be maintained with strictest impartiality on our part, and if we were finally forced to surrender it, it was through no will of our own. It was to become plain, month by month, that against a belligerent like Germany an attitude of neutrality in the interest of a general world peace was impossible. Never from the first had she any intention of respecting our rights and sovereignty any more than she respected Belgium's. Slowly, and against his will, the President was therefore to become convinced of this until on April 2, 1917, he was compelled by the evidence to reach the following conclusion:

"One of the things that have served to convince us that the Prussian autocracy was not

Austria-Hungary, August 14; Belgium and Germany (where the first blows in the war had been struck in the west), August 18. The delay in this latest declaration may be due to accident. To us it seems more probable that after consideration of the fact that we were not parties to the violated treaty, Washington decided to pursue steadily the policy of non-interference in European matters. The following day President Wilson's announcement to the American people was presented in the Senate, and ordered printed. *Cf. American Journal of International Law*, Special Supplement, July, 1915, pp. 194–200.

and could never be our friend is that from the very outset of the present war it has filled our unsuspecting communities and even our offices of Government with spies and set criminal intrigues everywhere afoot against our national unity of council, our peace within and without, our industries and our commerce.

"Indeed, it is now evident that its spies were here even before the war began, and it is, unhappily, not a matter of conjecture, but a fact proved in our courts of justice, that the intrigues which have more than once come perilously near to disturbing the peace and dislocating the industries of the country have been carried on at the instigation, with the support, and even under the personal direction, of official agents of the Imperial German Government accredited to the Government of the United States."*

Not until the declaration of war, however, did the President or his advisers permit the government to depart in the slightest from the course formulated, a course of implied and frequently expressed good-will and friendship to Germany. The government was to cling desperately to this policy long after a great part of the American people recognized it as impossible. Indeed it was plain to most Americans that after what had

* A detailed account of the violations of American rights by German spies and German agents will be found in Chapter VIII.

happened in Belgium, it was useless to ask individuals to be neutral in "thought and opinion" toward a Power which was overriding all considerations of law and humanity. But this attitude of neutrality of thought which the President had enjoined upon us was neither necessary nor was it expected of us even by Germany. For the German conception had been officially defined in her war manual.

"It is here assumed that neutrality is not to be regarded as synonymous with indifference and impartiality with regard to the belligerent parties and the continuance of the war. As to the expression 'partisanship,' neutral states can only be expected to observe international courtesies; as long as these are observed, there is no reason to interfere." *

These international courtesies were observed to the letter with regard to Germany even more than with regard to England. As we look back, it is interesting to note the difference in our tone, and occasionally, indeed, in our attitude, toward England and toward Germany. It would almost seem as if the government had expected violations of international law from

* *Kriegsbrauch im Landkriege*, Berlin, 1902, p. 69.

Britain and a speedy and willing compliance from Prussia.*

Nothing illustrates this better than our correspondence with England with regard to lists of contraband at a time when we failed to protest to Germany against so flagrant an offense as that which the German Embassy committed in inserting in New York papers the notice warning American citizens not to take ship on the *Lusitania;* so serious an interference in our rights that it would have justified our government in immediately handing Count von Bernstorff his passports.

To understand the discussions with England we must remember that the Hague Conferences had fixed no lists of contraband to which all the Powers would agree. Such an attempt had been made in the Declaration of London, in 1908–9, but had not at the outbreak of the present war been ratified by a sufficient number of belligerent Powers to be reckoned a part of the ac-

* It is merely necessary to call the reader's attention to Washington's insistence on the "ancient friendship between their people and our own" in the President's Address to Congress, announcing the severance of diplomatic relations on February 3, 1917. Phrases of like purport are found in the notes after the *Lusitania* and *Sussex* sinkings. No such special considerations are urged in our notes to England, and they appear curt in comparison.

cepted law of nations. Our State Department on August 6, 1914, however, had proposed to the belligerents that this declaration be accepted. Whether they would do so or not was a matter of choice, and as France, Russia, and Great Britain suggested modifications, the proposal was withdrawn by us on October 22, 1914, and we fell back on our own treaties and the rules of International Law.* The question of what constitutes contraband was in the absence of any such general agreement a matter for discussion, though we could hardly claim as neutrals what we had denied to other neutrals when we ourselves had been belligerents.

In President Lincoln's Proclamations of June 13 and 24, 1865, he had listed as contraband "all articles from which ammunition is manufactured," and Secretary of State Hay, at the time of the Boxer troubles had included both copper and raw cotton as among such articles.† In spite of this, however, the United States refused to acquiesce in Great Britain's treatment

* *American Journal of International Law*, Special Supplement, July, 1915, pp. 7–8.

† Telegram to Mr. Rockhill, American commissioner, March 19, 1901. This whole question of contraband is thoroughly discussed by Scott in "A Survey of International Relations," pp. 74–105.

of copper shipments as contraband, and Secretary of State Bryan was compelled frankly to admit the awkwardness of the situation in his letter to Senator Stone of January 8, 1915.

"The United States has now under consideration the question of the right of a belligerent to include 'copper unwrought' in its list of absolute contraband instead of in its list of conditional contraband. As the Government of the United States has in the past placed 'all articles from which ammunition is manufactured' in its contraband list, and has declared copper to be among such materials, it necessarily finds some embarrassment in dealing with the subject.

"Moreover, there is no instance of the United States acquiescing in Great Britain's seizure of copper shipments. *In every case in which it had been done vigorous representations have been made to the British Government, and the representatives of the United States have pressed for the release of the shipments.*" *

Neither in this matter of contraband nor in any other did we make the slightest concession to England. Her request that Canadian soldiers who were returning from Europe, and who, whether owing to wounds or otherwise, had been discharged as unfit for further service, be al-

* *Am. Jour. Inter. Law*, Special Supplement, July, 1915, p. 258.

lowed to pass through the State of Maine on their way home from Saint John's, New Brunswick, was denied, although it might have been granted without impropriety.

In contrast with this scrupulous insistence on our rights with England, when the German Embassy had been guilty of a capital breach of international decorum, to say the least, the Secretary of State,* took no action at the time and referred to it only with "regret" in the first *Lusitania* note, to call attention to the fact that such a warning could not be considered as an excuse in the following terms:

"There was recently published in the newspapers of the United States, I regret to inform the Imperial German Government, a formal warning, purporting to come from the Imperial German Embassy at Washington, addressed to the people of the United States, and stating, in effect, that any citizen of the United States who exercised his right of free travel upon the seas would do so at his peril if his journey should take him within the zone of waters within which the Imperial German Navy was using submarines against the Commerce of Great Britain and France, notwithstanding the respectful

* It is generally assumed that this note was written by President Wilson.

but very earnest protest of his Government, the Government of the United States. I do not refer to this for the purpose of calling the attention of the Imperial German Government at this time* to the surprising irregularity of a communication from the Imperial German Embassy at Washington addressed to the people of the United States through the newspapers, but only for the purpose of pointing out that no warning that an unlawful and inhumane act will be committed can possibly be accepted as an excuse or palliation for that act or as an abatement of the responsibility for its commission." †

Furthermore, as early as January 20, 1915, the Secretary of State wrote to the chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations:

"The Department of Justice has recently apprehended at least four persons of German nationality, who, it is alleged, obtained American passports under pretense of being American citizens and for the purpose of returning to Germany without molestation by her enemies during the voyage. There are indications that a systematic plan had been devised to obtain American passports through fraud for the purpose of securing passage for German officers and reservists desiring to return to Germany.

* No action was taken subsequently.

† *American Journal of International Law*, Special Supplement, July, 1915, p. 132.

Such fraudulent use of passports by Germans themselves can have no other effect than to cast suspicion upon American passports in general."*

At the time this letter was written by our Secretary of State, evidence was in the possession of our Department of Justice which proved conclusively, as we shall see in a later chapter, that this wholesale counterfeiting which "cast suspicion on American passports in general," was being carried on in an office maintained by the German Embassy and directed by officers paid by them. Yet no action was taken and no protest made to Berlin. Instead the State Department merely passed new regulations requiring the attaching of a photograph, and expressed the hope that this would "prevent any further misuse of American passports." There is, therefore, absolutely no basis of fact for the accusation that in our interpretation of our rights as neutrals we favored England as against Germany; an excellent case could be made out to prove the contrary, and it is certainly true that toward Germany we

* *American Journal of International Law*, Special Supplement, July, 1915, p. 262.

were lenient to a degree never exhibited toward the other belligerents.

In proportion as the war progressed England's control of the seas became more and more secure, and Germany was forced to accept increased difficulties in her attempts to obtain supplies and to maintain communication with the outside world. Great Britain also attempted to establish a blockade of Germany which was a long-recognized and universally accepted measure of naval warfare, and one which Great Britain herself had admitted, when at the time of the Civil War we blockaded the Southern ports, even though it ruined her cotton industry and threw thousands of her citizens into poverty and bankruptcy.

It is not our purpose to discuss here whether or not the British did succeed in effectively or legally establishing such a blockade. It is sufficient to say that we recognized and acquiesced in none of her measures which went beyond recognized right, and we protested in every case where her procedure was open to question. As a natural consequence of British naval su-

premacy England was in any case able to cut off most neutral trade from Germany, including our own, just as Germany, through the less effective activity of her raiders, attempted to cut off and interfere as far as possible with trade to Britain. Through all this period Germany made much pretense of being the defender of the principle of freedom of the seas. That she was, however, no more solicitous of our rights than her adversaries were, was manifest in the case of the *William P. Frye*, an American vessel carrying a cargo of wheat to the British Isles. The *Frye* was captured by the German raider *Prince Eitel Friedrich* on January 28, 1915, and sunk with her cargo. The sinking was in violation of our treaties of 1799 and 1828 with Prussia, and our government presented a claim for the value of the ship and a protest against the violation. The discussion which followed is particularly interesting, since on November 29, 1915, in the communication which closed the case there occurs the following promise, which should be kept in mind when appraising Germany's good faith in her subsequent negotiations with the United States:

"The German Government quite shares the view of the American Government that all possible care must be taken for the security of the crew and passengers of a vessel to be sunk. Consequently, the persons found on board of a vessel may not be ordered into her lifeboats except when the general conditions, that is to say, the weather, the condition of the sea, and the neighborhood of the coast afford absolute certainty that the boats will reach the nearest port. For the rest the German Government begs to point out that in cases where German naval forces have sunk neutral vessels for carrying contraband, no loss of life has yet occurred." *

The fact that the English Navy had practically driven German war-ships from the seas not only made it difficult or impossible for neutrals to land supplies in Germany, but also made it possible for neutral commerce unmolested to carry supplies of all sorts to the Allied governments. There is no obligation whatever in international law upon a neutral government to forbid its subjects or citizens to send supplies to belligerents. Great Britain and France were very far from being prepared for this war

* Scott, "A Survey of International Relations Between the United States and Germany," p. 332.

to the same degree that Germany had been, and, naturally, when the seas were open, they bought from American manufacturers large quantities of munitions of war. There is no question that these shipments were useful to the Allies. There is also no question that they were entirely legal. America was doing only what Germany and Austria had repeatedly done. Prussian subjects sold large quantities of ammunition to Russia during the Crimean War, and since that time German subjects have supplied all belligerents who needed munitions and who had money to buy them. Germany and Austria-Hungary, as Secretary Lansing pointed out, sold munitions of war to Great Britain in her war with the Boer Republics, although the Boers had neither ships nor seacoast, and could consequently not import them. It had in its own practice never fixed any limit to this trade, but it is only fair to say that in the *Kriegsbrauch im Landkriege*, issued in 1902, though she admitted the right of subjects of neutral states to supply belligerents with contraband, she tried to make a distinction between supplying it in small quantities and on a large scale. Yet after this Germany had furnished the Turks

with ammunition in their war against Italy, and both Austria and Germany had furnished munitions to belligerents in the Balkan wars without establishing any limit. Not only, therefore, was there no legal reason why the United States should prevent this traffic, but in permitting it she was merely following "the long-established practice of the two empires in the matter of trade in war supplies."

There was in addition to the question of principle a practical and substantial reason why the government of the United States has from the foundation of the republic to the present advocated and practised an unrestricted trade in arms and military supplies:

"It has never been the policy of this country to maintain in time of peace," wrote Secretary Lansing, "a large military establishment of stores of arms and ammunition sufficient to repel invasion by a well equipped and powerful enemy. It has desired to remain at peace with all nations and to avoid any appearance of menacing such peace by the threat of its armies and navies. In consequence of this standing policy the United States would, in the event of attack by a foreign power, be at the outset of the war seriously, if not fatally, embarrassed by the lack of arms and ammunition and by

the means to produce them in sufficient quantities to supply the requirements of national defense. The United States has always depended upon the right and power to purchase arms and ammunition from neutral nations in case of foreign attack. This right, which it claims for itself, it cannot deny to others.

"Manifestly the application of this theory would result in every nation becoming an armed camp, ready to resist aggression and tempted to employ force in asserting its rights rather than appeal to reason and justice for the settlement of international disputes.

"Perceiving, as it does, that the adoption of the principle that it is the duty of a neutral to prohibit the sale of arms and ammunition to a belligerent during the progress of a war would inevitably give the advantage to the belligerent which had encouraged the manufacture of munitions in time of peace and which had laid in vast stores of arms and ammunition in anticipation of war, the Government of the United States is convinced that the adoption of the theory would force militarism on the world and work against that universal peace which is the desire and purpose of all nations which exalt justice and righteousness in their relations with one another." *

While both Austria and Germany could not but admit the right of our citizens to sell mu-

* Secretary Lansing to Ambassador Penfield, August 12, 1915. *Cf. American Journal of International Law*, Special Supplement, July, 1915, pp. 168–9.

nitions to belligerents, they tried by direct representation and by press campaigns in this country to bring about its complete suppression or at least its restriction. It was for this reason that Senator Stone, then chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, brought up this question among others in his letter to the Secretary of State on January 8, 1915. The whole question is summed up in the last paragraph of Secretary Bryan's detailed reply of January 20:

"If any American citizens, partisans of Germany and Austria-Hungary, feel that this administration is acting in a way injurious to the cause of those countries, this feeling results from the fact that on the high seas the German and Austro-Hungarian naval power is thus far inferior to the British. It is the business of a belligerent operating on the high seas, not the duty of a neutral, to prevent contraband from reaching an enemy. Those in this country who sympathize with Germany and Austria-Hungary appear to assume that some obligation rests upon this Government in the performance of its neutral duty to prevent all trade in contraband, and thus to equalize the difference due to the relative naval strength of the belligerents. No such obligation exists; it would be an unneutral act, an act of partiality on the part of this Government to adopt such a policy

if the Executive had the power to do so. If Germany and Austria-Hungary can not import contraband from this country, it is not, because of that fact, the duty of the United States to close its markets to the allies. The markets of this country are open upon equal terms to all the world, to every nation, belligerent or neutral.

"The foregoing categorical replies to specific complaints is sufficient answer to the charge of unfriendliness to Germany and Austria-Hungary."*

We have dealt with this question at length because it illustrates how Germany chafed because of her defeat on the seas, and because it was destined to bring about an attitude of marked hostility on the part of the German people toward the United States. So acute did this hostility become that later, when American sympathizers with Germany raised a fund for the relief of distressed families in Germany, and it was decided to turn this over to the town councils in Germany for distribution, these councils refused to accept it.† Nor was this confined to the civilian population. Through

* *American Journal of International Law*, Special Supplement, July, 1915, p. 266–7.

† Former Consul Roth, of Plauen, in article in New York *Times*, June 30, 1918.

diplomatic channels Austria-Hungary and Germany had failed to induce America to depart in their interest from the principles of international law. They were now as only too frequently to have recourse to the underhand methods which were to become so distressingly familiar. As a result of his attempts to cripple the Bethlehem Steel Company and the plants in the Middle West, Doctor Constantine Dumba had to be recalled by his government. It was discovered that this Austro-Hungarian ambassador to the United States was engaged in the attempt to cripple the Bethlehem Steel Company and other munition factories in the East and Middle West. For this amazing interference by a foreign ambassador in American affairs, Secretary Lansing demanded Doctor Dumba's recall and the demand was acceded to by Vienna. It is now known that the German ambassador, Count von Bernstorff, was equally guilty, though at the time he escaped detection by effrontery. German underhand practice and offenses against the sovereignty of the United States were, however, so frequent and important that they must be considered later in a separate chapter.

The German Emperor did not fail to show his hostility to America and our ambassador, whom he refused to receive and who had difficulty thereafter in obtaining the necessary diplomatic interviews. The whole attitude of Germany toward America from this time forward is perhaps best represented by what happened when Mr. Gerard had his important conference with Wilhelm II on October 22, 1915:

"The Emperor was standing," says he, "so naturally I stood also; and according to his habit . . . he stood very close to me and talked very earnestly. . . . He showed, however, great bitterness against the United States and repeatedly said, 'America had better look out after this war'; and 'I shall stand no nonsense from America after the war.' . . . I was so fearful in reporting the dangerous part of this interview, on account of the many spies not only in my own embassy but also in the State Department, that I sent but a very few words in a roundabout way by courier direct to the President."*

It was to be evident in the submarine campaign which followed that in his measures

* Ambassador Gerard, "My Four Years in Germany," 1917, pp. 251–253.

against neutrals the Kaiser and his advisers were not to be henceforth restrained (if they ever had been) by any recognition of American rights, and the spirit of the whole submarine warfare may be read out of these undisguised threats made to our ambassador at Berlin.

CHAPTER V

ALIENATION OF AMERICAN SYMPATHIES

THE United States finally entered the war against Germany as the result of a long series of actions which proved that we were dealing, in President Wilson's expressive phrase, with "an irresponsible Government which has thrown aside all considerations of humanity and of right and is running amuck." If a "just and necessary war" (granted that to-day there can be such a war) had arisen between Germany and Austria, on the one hand, and France, Russia, and Great Britain on the other, and had been conducted according to the recognized laws of war, there is no reason to believe that the majority of Americans would have sided against the Central Empires. They had not sided against Germany in 1870. Quite the contrary. Germans like Herkimer, Steuben, Karl Schurz, and Franz Sigel had played an important part in our history. The Germans were a large element in our emigrant population and

had proved themselves thrifty and law-abiding citizens. We had never been at war with their country; our old treaty with Prussia seemed to indicate that we were friendly rather than rival Powers. Indeed, the tension between us had never been as keen as it was between ourselves and France in the days of the French Revolution and the Directorate, and on our unswept political hearth there lay still the ashes of old wars with Britain. Toward neither side was there any initial hostility, however, though past relationships favored Germany, the land of the universities in which most of the leaders in our academic life had been trained. It is, therefore, fair to say that if the American people had taken any side it would have been that to which unprejudiced judgment on the issues of the war and its conduct forced them, and that in general the American people would have preferred to regard the conflict in accordance with our historic policy as a war in another world. From the President's Proclamation of August 19, 1914, we have seen that at the outset, our government had assumed that this was such a war. But even after we had refused to

pass judgment on the issues involved, Germany was to render impossible the continuance of this initial attitude of aloofness. She was to begin by throwing away the good-will of the world, and step by step her course was to alienate American sympathy also. She forced us to recognize in her, first the enemy to the peace of Europe and then the enemy to the peace of the world and to the life and institutions of all free peoples. Indeed, so flagrant was her conduct that the phrase "strictly neutral," which should have served as the standard of the American attitude, became among our people a by-word and reproach.

In this process of alienation the first step was her violation of the neutrality of Belgium, which, as one of the Powers signatory to the treaty of 1839 she had pledged herself to defend. The brutality and injustice of this act was made somewhat less shocking by the plea of guilty which the German chancellor promptly offered before the Reichstag. The world, however, condemned this treacherous aggression. To make amends, therefore, Germany began to vilify her innocent victim. Some weeks later,

in the course of the invasion, she claimed to have discovered memoranda of conversations between the English and Belgian military attachés, and falsely announced to the world that Belgium had forfeited her neutrality and had entered into an alliance with England. No one knew better than those responsible for this accusation how dishonest it was, for, as the ex-director of Krupp's was later to make plain, Belgium had such confidence in Germany's pledges that she was dependent on Krupp and German munition-makers for her war material. When, therefore, she was forced to defend herself against Germany her difficulties were much increased by the fact that the Allies, to whom she was forced to look for protection, could not provide the ammunition she used or the type of gun to which she was accustomed. If, therefore, Germany's act was brutal, her excuse was vicious. The morality of the whole procedure was summarized by a Swiss neutral, Karl Spitteler, who says:

"That a wrong was done to Belgium was originally openly confessed by the perpetrator. As an after-thought, in order to appear whiter,

Cain blackened Abel. In my opinion it was a spiritual blunder to rummage for documents in the pockets of the quivering victim. . . . To calumniate her in addition is really too much." *

Neutrals were not long to be allowed the poor consolation of believing that Germany's act was one of sudden and unaccountable desperation. That it was the expression of a philosophy of national life became evident a few days later, on the publication of Sir Edward Goschen's last interview with Von Bethmann-Hollweg. The chancellor, when he realized the momentous character of the impending conflict, which seems to have been arranged without his full knowledge, evidently used what little influence he had to prevent it. When, however, he saw the military party and his master, the Emperor, driving for war, he tried again to prevent England from entering the great mêlée. England, too, had guaranteed Belgium's neutrality and had announced through her ambassador that she would fight if that neutrality were violated. The German chancellor seems to have been unable to understand a course so

* *Cf.* Harding, "The Study of the Great War," p. 48.

plainly indicated. "He said that the step taken by His Majesty's Government was terrible to a degree, just for a word—'neutrality,' a word which in war-time had so often been disregarded—just for a scrap of paper Great Britain was going to make war." When the chancellor's "scrap of paper" became the subject of grim jest, Von Bethmann-Hollweg tried to volatilize from his acknowledged phrase the opprobrious connotations. But the excuses had much the same effect as Germany's accusations against Belgium after the violation.*

Time is the great corrector of history. It sets detail into perspective, and we are only now beginning to see how these acts fit into the drama of Germany's militaristic madness. They seemed to us at first impossible grotesques, but as time wore on and our knowledge of German purpose became clearer, it became evident that they were no exceptions, no gargoyles, but the keystones of the arch. When, after illegal and inhumane acts had been committed, the inquiries and protests of neutral governments

* Passelecq, "The Sincere Chancellor," in *The Nineteenth Century and After*, May, 1917.

failed to bring the punishment of offenders, or even excuses, we came painfully to realize that such acts were the result of a settled policy and in accordance with Prussian ideals. For just as the German conception held that the state was something absolute, that there was no judge above it, so war, the state in action, was also absolute and could be checked by no laws or principles of humanity and justice. Germany had, to be sure, signed the Conventions of The Hague, and by doing so had led us to believe that she, with other nations, would make some attempt to follow them. But that this was not the case becomes clear when we read the *Kriegsbrauch im Landkriege*,* the official publication of the General Staff, destined to instruct officers on the usages of war. Here we find not only a different set of principles, but the frank admission that The Hague Conferences had been signed merely for the purpose of disarming neutral suspicion.

"Attempts of this kind (to mitigate the horrors of war) will also not be wanting in the fu-

* *Cf.* also *L'Interprète Militaire*, the German publication for the guidance of officers in conquered territory.

ture, the more so as these agitations have found a kind of moral recognition in some provisions of the Geneva Convention and the Brussels and Hague Conferences. . . The danger that in this way he (the officer) will arrive at false views about the essential character of war must not be lost sight of. . . By steeping himself in military history an officer will be able to guard himself against excessive humanitarian notions; it will teach him that certain severities are indispensable to war, nay more, that the only true humanity very often lies in a ruthless application of them. . . .

"Every means of war without which the object of the war cannot be obtained is permissible. . . It follows from these universally valid principles that wide limits are set to the subjective freedom and arbitrary judgment of the commanding officer." *

At the very first, then, we were given clear indications of the truth which was to dawn upon us slowly, and which the President was to express nearly four years later when he announced that we could not take "the word of the present rulers of Germany as a guarantee of anything that is to endure," and that they were "incapable of making a covenanted peace."

After Germany's violations of the treaties

* *Cf.* Harding, "The Study of the Great War," p. 56.

we were to be further disillusioned about her methods of making war. How, we asked, will Germany treat these people whom she has wronged? The question was all the more pertinent since neutrals who have defended their neutrality are, according to The Hague Conventions, not guilty of any hostile act. We were not willing to hurry to conclusions. When President Poincaré called President Wilson's attention to what was happening, the latter refused at the time to act as judge, and, speaking for "a nation which abhors inhuman practices in the conduct of a war," replied on September 19, 1914:

"The time will come when this great conflict is over and when the truth can be impartially determined. When that time arrives those responsible for violations of the rules of civilized warfare, if such violations have occurred, and for false charges against their adversaries, must of course bear the burden of the judgment of the world."

Most of us did not imagine then that the war could last more than some months, but several years have now passed and the time has come

British official photograph. Copyright by Underwood & Underwood.

British soldiers conducting Belgian refugees to a place of safety.

"Germany had in that country instituted for a time at least a reign of terror."

when we can see what happened in something like its true perspective. Indeed, the whole question has been made the subject of rigorous examination by distinguished American historians, following the official investigations by Belgium, Germany, and the Bryce Commission. They have submitted all documents to scientific scrutiny and accepted only matter from German and American sources, and such other material as scrupulously scientific investigators would be justified in accepting. The results have been published in the studies edited by Professor Munro.*

That we may not be unjust in a matter which so easily arouses anger and detestation, let us confine ourselves entirely to records made by the Germans themselves. The German soldier is advised to keep a diary when on campaign and many of these diaries were captured. We may begin by quoting Joh. van der Schoot, reservist of the Tenth Company, 39th Reserve Infantry Regiment, Seventh Reserve Army Corps, who announces: "We lived like God in

* *Cf.* especially "German War Practices" and "German Treatment of Conquered Territory," on which we have drawn heavily. (Committee on Public Information.)

Belgium." Curiously enough he did not mean that they showed mercy or administered justice, as the following extracts will show:

"A horrible bath of blood. The whole village burnt, the French thrown into the blazing houses, civilians with the rest."—(From the diary of Private Hassemer, of the Eighth Army Corps.)

"In the night of August 18–19, the village of Saint-Maurice was punished for having fired on German soldiers by being burnt to the ground by the German troops (two regiments, the 12th Landwehr and the 17th). The village was surrounded, men posted about a yard from one another, so that no one could get out. Then the Uhlans set fire to it, house by house. Neither man, woman, nor child could escape; only the greater part of the live stock was carried off, as that could be used. Anyone who ventured to come out was shot down. All the inhabitants left in the village were burnt with the houses."—(From the diary of Private Karl Scheufele, of the Third Bavarian Regiment of Landwehr Infantry.)

"The inhabitants have fled in the village. It was horrible. There was clotted blood on all the beards, and what faces one saw, terrible to behold! The dead, sixty in all, were at once buried. Among them were many old women, some old men, and a half-delivered woman, awful to see; three children had clasped each

other, and died thus. The altar and the vaults of the church are shattered. They had a telephone there to communicate with the enemy. This morning, September 2, all the survivors were expelled, and I saw four little boys carrying a cradle, with a baby five or six months old in it, on two sticks. All this was terrible to see. Shot after shot! Thunderbolt after thunderbolt! Everything is given over to pillage; fowls and the rest all killed. I saw a mother, too, with her two children; one had a great wound on the head and had lost an eye."—(From the diary of Lance-Corporal Paul Spielmann, of the Ersatz, First Brigade of Infantry of the Guard.)

"The pretty little village of Gue d'Ossus, however, was apparently set on fire without cause. A cyclist fell off his machine and his rifle went off. He immediately said he had been shot at. All the inhabitants were burnt in the houses. I hope there will be no more such horrors..

"At Leppe apparently 200 were shot. There must have been some innocent men among them. In future we shall have to hold an inquiry as to their guilt instead of shooting them.

"In the evening we marched to Maubert-Fontaine. Just as we were having our meal the alarm was sounded—every one is very jumpy.

"September 3rd. Still at Rethel, on guard over prisoners. . . . The houses are charming inside. The middle class in France has mag-

nificent furniture. We found stylish pieces everywhere and beautiful silk, but in what a state . . . Good God! . . . Every bit of furniture broken, mirrors smashed. The Vandals themselves could not have done more damage. This place is a disgrace to our army. The inhabitants who fled could not have expected, of course, that all their goods would have been left intact after so many troops had passed. But the column commanders are responsible for the greater part of the damage, as they could have prevented the looting and destruction. The damage amounts to millions of marks; even the safes have been attacked.

"In a solicitor's house, in which, as luck would have it, all was in excellent taste, including a collection of old lace and Eastern works of art, everything was smashed to bits.

"I could not resist taking a little memento myself here and there. . . . One house was particularly elegant, everything in the best taste. The hall was of light oak; I found a splendid raincoat under the staircase and a camera for Felix."—(From the diary of an officer in the 178th Regiment, Twelfth Saxon Corps.)

And inquiry proved that this was not the work of isolated individuals who had got out of hand. It was done with the knowledge, and in many cases at the instigation and with the co-operation of the high command. Nothing shows this more clearly than the unfortunate

attempt of the German authorities to defend themselves in their volume *Die völkerrechtswidrige Führung des Belgischen Volkskriegs*, for in this purely *ex parte* presentation the sworn depositions of the German soldiers proved the contrary of what was intended, and in addition the names of the German officers who gave the terrible orders are published officially. Nor were our own representatives in Belgium uninformed on what was taking place. Some reports must doubtless have reached Washington long before the return of Minister Whitlock. The following passage in his report to the Secretary of State made on September 12, 1917, is but a final confirmation of what we had already learned.

"Summary executions took place (at Dinant) without the least semblance of judgment. The names and number of the victims are not known, but they must be numerous. I have been unable to obtain precise details in this respect and the number of persons who have fled is unknown. Among the persons who were shot are: Mr. Defoin, mayor of Dinant; Sasserath, first alderman; Nimmer, age 70; consul for the Argentine Republic, Victor Poncelet, who was executed in the presence of his wife and seven children; Wasseige and his two sons;

Messrs. Gustave and Léon Nicaise, two very old men; Jules Monin and others were shot in the cellar of their brewery. Mr. Camille Pistte and son, age 17; Phillippart, Piedfort, his wife and daughter; Miss Marsigny. During the execution of about forty inhabitants of Dinant, the Germans placed before the condemned their wives and children. It is thus that Madame Albin who had just given birth to a child, three days previously, was brought on a mattress by German soldiers to witness the execution of her husband; her cries and supplications were so pressing that her husband's life was spared."

. . . . . .

"Tamines is a mining village in the Sambre; it is a collection of small cottages sheltering about 5,000 inhabitants, mostly all poor laborers.

"The little graveyard in which the church stands bears its mute testimony to the horror of the event. There are hundreds of new-made graves, each with its small wooden cross and its bit of flowers; the crosses are so closely huddled that there is scarcely room to walk between them. The crosses are alike and all bear the same date, the sinister date of August 22d, 1914.

"But whether their hands were cut off or not, whether they were impaled on bayonets or not, children were shot down, by military order, in cold blood. In the awful crime of the Rock of Bayard, there overlooking the

Meuse below Dinant, infants in their mother's arms were shot down without mercy. The deed, never surpassed in cruelty by any band of savages, is described by the Bishop of Namur himself:

" 'One scene surpasses in horror all others; it is the fusillade of the Rocher Bayard near Dinant. It appears to have been ordered by Colonel Meister. This fusillade made many victims among the near-by parishes, especially those of des Rivages and Neffe. It caused the death of nearly 90 persons, without distinction of age or sex. Among the victims were babies in arms, boys and girls, fathers and mothers of families, even old men.

" 'It was there that 12 children under the age of 6 perished from the fire of the executioners, 6 of them as they lay in their mothers' arms:

The child Fiévet, 3 weeks old.
Maurice Bétemps, 11 months old.
Nelly Pollet, 11 months old.
Gilda Genon, 18 months old.
Gilda Marchot, 2 years old.
Clara Struvay, 2 years and 6 months.

"'The pile of bodies comprised also many children from 6 to 14 years. Eight large families have entirely disappeared. Four have but one survivor. Those men that escaped death—and many of whom were riddled with bullets—were obliged to bury in a summary and hasty fashion their fathers, mothers, brothers, or

sisters; then after having been relieved of their money and being placed in chains they were sent to Cassel (Prussia).'"*

Where the shadows are so heavy it is hardly worth while to paint any darker isolated horrors like the brutal execution of Edith Cavell, which the American representatives tried to stay, or the murder of Captain Fryatt, for whom Ambassador Gerard attempted in vain to procure even the outward forms of justice.

But to have their rights as non-combatants trampled under foot, their houses looted, and their lives often sacrificed was not to be the end of the woe of the Belgians.

A new chapter was to be added, when in 1916 the German military authorities, who were the German power, ordered the wholesale deportation of Belgians and French working men, and often of women and girls. The account of one eye-witness must suffice, who describes merely what happened at Mons:

"I will take the 18th of November of last year (1916). A week or so before that a placard was placed on the walls telling my capital city

* *Cf.* "German War Practices," pp. 33, 34.

of Mons that in seven days all the men of that city who were not clergymen, who were not priests, who did not belong to the city council, would be deported.

"At half past five, in the gray of the morning of the 18th of November, they walked out, six thousand two hundred men at Mons, myself and another leading them down the cobblestones of the street and out where the rioting would be less than in the great city, with the soldiers on each side, with bayonets fixed, with the women held back.

"The degradation of it! The degradation of it as they walked into this great market square, where the pens were erected exactly as if they were cattle—all the great men of that province—the lawyers, the statesmen, the heads of the trades, the men that had made the capital of Hainaut glorious during the last twenty years.

"There they were collected; no question of who they were, whether they were busy or what they were doing, or what their position in life. 'Go to the right! Go to the left! Go to the right!' So they were turned to the one side or the other.

"Trains were standing there ready, steaming, to take them to Germany. You saw on the one side the one brother taken, the other brother left. A hasty embrace and they were separated and gone. You had here a man on his knees before a German officer, pleading and begging to take his old father's place; that

was all. The father went and the son stayed. They were packed in those trains that were waiting there.

"You saw the women in hundreds, with bundles in their hands, beseeching to be permitted to approach the trains, to give their men the last that they had in life between themselves and starvation—a small bundle of clothing to keep them warm on their way to Germany. You saw women approach with a bundle that had been purchased by the sale of the last of their household effects. Not one was allowed to approach to give her man the warm pair of stockings or the warm jacket, so there might be some chance of his reaching there. Off they went!"*

The same sad story was to be repeated throughout Belgium and northern France under conditions which were often worse. Minister Whitlock reported to our Secretary of State, November 28, 1916, that many men had been taken from the Province of Valenciennes. "They have been without food for sixty-three hours and have no blankets. Apparently they have been deprived of food in order to oblige them to work for the Germans."† Ambassador

* *Cf.* "German War Practices," pp. 70–71.
† *Cf.* "German War Practices," p. 76.

Gerard was at that time in the United States, and Mr. Grew who was chargé d'affaires took up the matter with the chancellor and Minister Whitlock, and representatives of other Powers were able to secure some lessening of the severity of the deportations. The American Government on December 5, 1916, through our representative at Berlin laid a formal protest before the German chancellor. Like protests were made by the Pope, the King of Spain, the government of Switzerland, and other neutrals. These were unavailing, though our own protest is interesting since it is made in the interest of "those humane principles of international practice which have long been accepted and followed by civilized nations." The words humane and humanity were now to appear repeatedly, and to be disregarded as often, in our protests to Berlin up to the time of our own entrance into the war.

The looting of houses by soldiers and deportations of whole sections of the population were to be followed by a systematic government exploitation according to a plan, which was designed for the deliberate purpose of crip-

pling manufacturing and industry in these countries in order to forestall future competition.*

"*August* 17*th.* We belong to the 7th Corps, 14th Infantry Division, Lieut.-General v. Fleck, Corps Commander v. Bulow.

"*August* 19*th.* Could not find regiment and remained with ammunition column. They, when we halted, plundered a villa; had a great deal of wine.

"*August* 22*nd.* Bivouac near Anderleus. Ravaged terribly, fed magnificently.

"*August* 26*th.* At 6 o'clock we went into bivouac. As always, the surrounding houses were immediately plundered. Found four rabbits, roasted. Dined magnificently. Plates, cups, knives and forks, glasses, etc.; eleven bottles champagne, four bottles wine, and six bottles liqueur were drunk.

"*August* 27*th.* At 6.30 marched out. Every one still provided with wine and champagne bottles.

"*August* 28*th.* Senkenteg (St. Quentin). Had to bivouac in the market-place. Emptied the houses; carried the beds on to the square and slept on them. Had our fill of coffee." (From diary of non-commissioned officer of the Reserve Klasse, 2d Regiment of Uhlans, Gardelegen, Altmark. Original German in Bryce, "Evidence and Documents," p. 260.)

* *Cf.* "German Treatment of Conquered Territory," p. 34.

Practically everything movable in Belgium was thus taken by looting, confiscation, or forced sale. The list of articles detailed in official ordinances for such confiscation or forced sale runs to six columns of a large octavo page. In addition all machinery for manufacturing that could be transported to Germany was taken, and where material like boilers which had been built into manufacturing plants could not be removed, they were rendered forever useless by being crushed and broken by special battering-rams designed to this end. We are left in no doubt as to the purpose of all this, for in February, 1917, Deputy Beumer took pride in making the following statement before the Prussian Diet.

"Anybody who knows the present state of things in Belgian industry will agree with me that it must take at least some years—assuming that Belgium is independent at all—before Belgium can even think of competing with us in the world market. And anybody who has travelled, as I have done, through the occupied districts of France, will agree with me that so much damage has been done to industrial property that no one need be a prophet in order to say that it will take more than ten years before

we need think of France as a competitor or of the re-establishment of French industry."*

The same purposes lay behind the systematic destruction and laying waste of a large and once rich section of France at the time of the Hindenburg retreat in the spring of 1917. Everything that could possibly be taken was taken. Everything that could be of any use to the sorely tried population was destroyed; fruit-trees were sawed down, farming implements collected and burned. Much of it could not possibly be claimed to bear the poor justification of military necessity. For descriptions, let us confine ourselves again to German witnesses, the first passage translated from the *Berliner Tageblatt* of March 26, 1917:

"Smouldering fires and smoke and stench; a rumble spreading from village to village—the mine charges are still doing their final work, which leaves nothing more to do.

"It is not so easy to scatter a whole village into brick-dust. There are hundreds of villages out there which were under fire for weeks on end, yet still showed a wall or two and an occasional roof. . . . But when our engineers get

* *Cf.* "German Treatment of Conquered Territory," p. 7.

to work on a village, our engineers! Then it goes into the air as if a mighty earthquake had caught it, it crumbles and breaks up and falls, and the last pitiful houses are knocked out by the *coup de grace.* And what a rubbish-heap there lies spread—bricks and clay and stones and timbers licked by the flames. Poor devil of a war-zone, seek you habitation elsewhere. Old-time farms with massive walls, vaulting, and any amount of resisting power—their walls were drilled scientifically, and the charges fired. Then the whole farm crumpled up, just as it was intended to do—half over the road which it was its business to bury, and the other half into the cracking cellars.

"Rubble, nothing but rubble, all this ancient village history, all these future prospects of modern peasant life. The fine broad yard sinks away with the cottage; the cottage burns quietly to ashes, and the remains of its clay walls yield to the first serious stroke of the battering-ram. The great farm buildings put up a defense—only to fly into the air, rain down again, and mingle themselves with their neighbors' misery in a field of ruins which once bore a name and paid a rent.

"Let them see it over there! Let them see it over there! This fearful naked war should be reflected in all the shop windows of the Boulevards. We have put distance between us and our enemies. It is a desert full of wretchedness. . . .

"Farewell, comrades of the Somme! The

earth which drank your blood is upheaved and torn asunder. It is made unfruitful, it is turned into a desert, and your graves are made free from the dwellings of men. Those who tread it, your desert, will be greeted by our shells."

The second is from the *Lokal Anzeiger*, of March 18, 1917:

"In the course of these last few months great stretches of French territory have been turned by us into a dead country. It varies in width from 10 to 12 or 15 kilometers (6¼ to 7½ or 8 miles) and extends along the whole of our new position, presenting a terrible barrier of desolation to any enemy hardy enough to advance against our new lines. No village or farm was left standing on this glacis, no road was left passable, no railway track or embankment was left in being. Where once were woods there are gaunt rows of stumps; the wells have been blown up, wires, cables, and pipe-lines destroyed. In front of our new position runs, like a gigantic ribbon, an empire of death."

It would be useless to continue the recital of unwarranted practices by Germans in Poland, or those permitted by the Germans to their allies, the Turks, in Armenia. The spirit in which the whole was done is sufficiently evident in the order issued by General Stenger, of the

The ruins of Louvain.

"The spirit that dictated such orders was the Prussian war spirit."

58th German Brigade, on August 26, 1914, and which was testified to by numerous German prisoners taken from that brigade:

"After today no more prisoners will be taken. All prisoners are to be killed. Wounded, with or without arms, are to be killed. Even prisoners already grouped in convoys are to be killed. Let not a single living enemy remain behind us." *

If any of these practices were later modified it was done not out of any consideration for humanity or respect for signed conventions; any abatements noticeable were effected by the fear of neutral opinion or of reprisals on German prisoners. The spirit that dictated such orders was the Prussian war spirit.

All this had not been done against us except in the sense that it had been done against humanity and against those laws of war which through two centuries civilized nations had been trying to formulate and establish. As the truth began to come to us, it made neutrality of thought impossible, though our government continued to maintain a scrupulous neutrality

* Harding, "The Study of the Great War," p. 61.

of action. What had happened, however, had served very largely to undermine our faith in the good-will or legitimate intentions of the Imperial German Government. When, during this period and later, aggressive measures were taken against our own rights and privileges, we were naturally forced to interpret them in the light of what had taken place in Germany's relations with other nations. The change of sentiment that came over the American people is well epitomized by what happened in the case of Vernon Kellogg during his work with the Commission for Relief in Belgium, and which he gave in his statement to the American Committee on Public Information at the time of its investigation.*

"I went into Belgium and occupied France a neutral and I maintained while there a steadfastly neutral behavior. But I came out no neutral. I cannot conceive that any American enjoying an experience similar to mine could have come out a neutral. He would come out, as I came, with the ineradicable conviction that a people or a government which can do what the Germans did and are doing in Bel-

* *Cf.* "German War Practices," pp. 93–94.

gium and France to-day must not be allowed, if there is power on earth to prevent it, to do this a moment longer than can be helped. And they must not be allowed ever to do it again.

"I went in also a hater of war, and I came out a more ardent hater of war. But, also, I came out with the ineradicable conviction, again, that the only way in which Germany under its present rule and in its present state of mind can be kept from doing what it has done is by force of arms. It can not be prevented by appeal, concession, or treaties. Hence, ardently as I hope that all war may cease, I hope that this war may not cease until Germany realizes that the civilized world simply will not allow such horrors as those for which Germany is responsible in Belgium and France to be any longer possible."

CHAPTER VI

THE *LUSITANIA*

THE first serious crisis in our relations with Germany was to arise as a result of her use of submarines against merchantmen. Germany had already been guilty, as we have seen, of gross violations of the rules of war on land. She had torn up her treaty with Belgium, she had in that country instituted for a time at least a reign of terror and, after having invaded it, contrary to the rules of war, refused to feed the Belgian civilians, though according to The Hague Conventions, which Germany had signed, it was the duty of the occupying Power to feed them as well as it fed its own soldiers.

The hard fate which she had forced upon the civilian population seemed to move neither her rulers nor her people. As a consequence the Belgians were in the winter of 1914–15 reduced to a condition bordering on starvation. The sufferings of this innocent country had made a particular appeal to neutral sym-

pathies, and America had, therefore, after considerable difficulty organized the Commission for Relief in Belgium. During the early months of this same year were to appear the more or less official investigations which testified to the conduct of the German invading force, which we have already considered.

Germany had already bombarded open towns like Scarborough and Yarmouth, in which numerous civilians had been killed, and had added another chapter to the horrors of war when on April 22, once more against the express stipulations of The Hague Conventions, she used poisonous gas at the Battle of Ypres. However, the offenses which she had committed on land we overlooked, even when brought officially to our attention, as they were when the Belgian Commission laid its grievances before the President. It is necessary to make this clear to all those who believe that we entered this war merely out of considerations of humanity. We paid no heed to such considerations until Germany directly threatened us and began to carry out violations of the rights of American citizens themselves,

rights recognized since the foundation of our republic, rights sanctioned by international law, and furthermore established in many cases by special treaty between ourselves and Prussia. We had refused to protest against the violation of the rights of European countries—it now became a question of our own rights. Would Germany prove more scrupulous on the seas, and would she exhibit there any regard for those principles of humanity which had failed to restrain her in her warfare in Europe?

We must first consider the situation which had been developed. England had been unprepared for any war on land, and therefore had no considerable army to throw into the fighting in Europe at the beginning of hostilities. She had, however, been rapidly recruiting and training forces at home, and in the early months of 1915 the time had come when these troops and their supplies were ready to be transported to France. Large quantities of munitions, as we have seen, were soon to come from America, and German trade had been cut off. For all these reasons, therefore, Germany was anxious

to adopt measures which would prevent this increase of strength from making itself felt, and also, if possible, to destroy England's control of the seas and to open German ports again to the German navy and to the merchant fleets of neutrals.

The simplest solution of her problem she saw in an extension of the use of submarines. She knew perfectly that this could not be done as she expected to do it, in conformity with international law, but, as Secretary Zimmermann assured Ambassador Gerard, she did not believe that neutral Powers would go to war because of these violations. Furthermore, she believed that this inhuman method of warfare would bring speedy success, and, as usual, she relied upon that success for her justification. Her decision, because of its shocking character, startled us at the time and struck us as something sudden. We must remember that it was not so, that she had calculated the chances and begun a considerable time before to prepare and increase her submarines and her bases. Von Tirpitz had given out an interview late in 1914, which indicated that the plans had been

matured. He merely desired to prepare American sentiment for what was coming.

On the 4th of February, 1915, Germany issued the following proclamation:

"1. The waters surrounding Great Britain and Ireland including the whole English channel are hereby declared to be war zone. On and after the 18th of February, 1915, every enemy merchant ship found in the said war zone will be destroyed without its being always possible to avert the dangers threatening the crews and passengers on that account.

"2. Even neutral ships are exposed to danger in the war zone as in view of the misuse of neutral flags ordered on January 31 by the British Government and of the accidents of naval war, it can not always be avoided to strike even neutral ships in attacks that are directed at enemy ships.

"3. Northward navigation around the Shetland Islands, in the eastern waters of the North Sea, and in a strip of not less than 30 miles width along the Netherlands coast is in no danger."*

This amazing document was communicated to our government accompanied by a memorandum respecting the "retaliatory measures

* *American Journal of International Law*, Special Supplement, July, 1915, p. 84.

which had been rendered necessary" by the methods employed by England. In effect, it amounted to a series of grave accusations against all neutrals including ourselves.

It began by saying that Great Britain's conduct of commercial warfare had been a mockery, complained of England's modification of the Declaration of London, her interpretation of contraband, her taking German reservists off neutral vessels, her establishing of a blockade not in accordance with law, and her attempt to starve Germany. It went on to say: "The neutral Powers have in the main acquiesced in the measures of the British Government; in particular they have not been successful in securing the release by the British Government of the German subjects and German merchandise illegally taken from their vessels. To a certain extent they have even contributed toward the execution of the measures adopted by England in defiance of the principle of the freedom of the seas by prohibiting the export and transit of goods destined for peaceable purposes in Germany, thus evidently yielding to pressure by England."

To make neutrals *participes criminis*, and to blame them for not having done what Germany by force of arms had been unable to do, represented a new departure in international law and a new aspect of German psychology.

She further explained her purposes as follows:

"To this end it will endeavor to destroy, after February 18 next, any merchant vessels of the enemy which present themselves at the seat of war above indicated, although it may not always be possible to avert the dangers which may menace persons and merchandise. Neutral powers are accordingly forewarned not to continue to entrust their crews, passengers, or merchandise to such vessels. Their attention is furthermore called to the fact that it is of urgency to recommend to their own vessels to steer clear of these waters. It is true that the German Navy has received instructions to abstain from all violence against neutral vessels recognizable as such; but in view of the hazards of war, and of the misuse of the neutral flag ordered by the British Government, it will not always be possible to prevent a neutral vessel from becoming the victim of an attack intended to be directed against a vessel of the enemy."*

* *American Journal of International Law*, Special Supplement, July, 1915, p. 85.

The flying of a neutral flag by a belligerent, fortunately or unfortunately, has always been permitted by the law of nations. The United States, when at war, has done so,* and the German Prize Ordinance of August 3, 1914, sanctioned this practice, and her men-of-war and her own raiders had used it.† Great Britain had employed the same *ruse de guerre*, and the captain of the *Lusitania*, on leaving England had, at the request of Americans aboard, hoisted

* On May 22, 1898, during the Spanish-American War, two American war-ships flying the Spanish flag put into Guantanamo Bay, in Cuba. The United States in the Naval War Code of June 27, 1900 (General Orders 551) forbade the use of false colors. American naval officers reported against the practice in 1903, though, "pending some international agreement" on the use of false colors, they felt that the United States would be at a disadvantage in accepting the action of 1900. This action was therefore revoked in February, 1904, and there has as yet been no international agreement.

† Article 82 of the German Prize Ordinance reads: "During a pursuit the war ensign need not be displayed, and the use of any merchant flag is permitted." Perels, the German author of "Das Internationale Öffentliche Seerecht der Gegenwart" (1903) says, "It is not to be regarded as forbidden in all circumstances," but holds that the proper flag must be displayed before going into action or exercising the right of visit and search (p. 182). Perels was the greatest German authority and counsellor to the German admiralty. His successor in this post, Schramm, in his "Das Prisenrecht in Seiner Neuesten Gestalt" (1913), holds (p. 294) according to the laws of war the regular war-ships are entitled to resort to war ruses, such, for instance, as the flying of a false national flag. It was certainly not the immorality of the procedure which distressed the Germans. The use of a false flag is forbidden in warfare on land. Yet Germany has repeatedly given her aeroplanes the insignia of her enemies, and has dressed her soldiers in their uniforms. A number of Germans dressed in French uniforms were killed by the Americans when the Germans crossed the Marne in July, 1918.

our flag. We as a government were in no wise responsible and, indeed, the German course was admitted to be an act of retaliation which might be justified if its effects were confined to the guilty enemy, but which, as a well-known authority has said, "was certainly not permissible against neutrals and will not, it is believed, be permissible until the distinction between guilt and innocence is destroyed."

To this communication, therefore, we replied on February 10, calling attention to the danger of such illegal policy if it should destroy an American vessel or cause the death of an American citizen. Our protest explained the right of belligerents in dealing with neutral vessels as follows:

"It is of course not necessary to remind the German Government that the sole right of a belligerent in dealing with neutral vessels on the high seas is limited to visit and search, unless a blockade is proclaimed and effectively maintained, which this Government does not understand to be proposed in this case. To declare or exercise a right to attack and destroy any vessel entering a prescribed area of the high seas without first certainly determining its belligerent nationality and the contraband

character of its cargo would be an act so unprecedented in naval warfare that this Government is reluctant to believe that the Imperial Government of Germany in this case contemplates it as possible. The suspicion that enemy ships are using neutral flags improperly can create no just presumption that all ships traversing a prescribed area are subject to the same suspicion. It is to determine exactly such questions that this Government understands the right of visit and search to have been recognized." *

We furthermore reminded Germany that we were open to none of the accusations which had been made against neutrals and concluded as follows:

"If such a deplorable situation should arise, the Imperial German Government can readily appreciate that the Government of the United States would be constrained to hold the Imperial German Government to a strict accountability for such acts of their naval authorities and to take any steps it might be necessary to take to safeguard American lives and property and to secure to American citizens the full enjoyment of their acknowledged rights on the high seas." †

* *American Journal of International Law*, Special Supplement, July, 1915, pp. 86–87.

† *Ibid.*, p. 87.

At the same time, however, though we were not bound to do so, we sent a note to Great Britain asking that it refrain from using the American flag. The speedy reply of the German Government, on February 16, indicated that they had considered all these points in advance of their decision, and it merely insisted again on its own innocence and the guilt of England, and cited the case of the *Wilhelmina*, in which an American vessel carrying grain to Germany was held up by the British and brought before a prize-court. Incidentally it might be said that we had already protested the *Wilhelmina* case, and it was no worse, indeed not so serious, a violation of our rights as Germany was guilty of when she sank the *William F. Frye* and her cargo, as we have already explained. The accusations against neutrals were repeated and a protest was added against our trade in munitions:

"The German Government have not in consequence made any charge of formal breach of neutrality. The German Government can not, however, do otherwise, especially in the interest of absolute clearness in the relations

between the two countries, than to emphasize that they, in common with the public opinion in Germany, feel themselves placed at a great disadvantage through the fact that the neutral powers have hitherto achieved no success or only an unmeaning success in their assertion of the right to trade with Germany, acknowledged to be legitimate by international law, whereas they make unlimited use of their right to tolerate trade in contraband with England and our other enemies. Conceded that it is the formal right of neutrals not to protect their legitimate trade with Germany and even to allow themselves knowingly and willingly to be induced by England to restrict such trade, it is on the other hand not less their good right, although unfortunately not exercised, to stop trade in contraband, especially the trade in arms, with Germany's enemies." *

It furthermore explained that it would plant mines and could not therefore be responsible for neutrals sunk in this way in the danger zone, and therefore suggested that "the safest method of doing this is to stay away from the area of maritime war. Neutral ships entering the closed waters in spite of this announcement, given so far in advance, and which seriously

* *American Journal of International Law*, Special Supplement, July, 1915, p. 92.

impair the accomplishment of the military purpose against England, bear their own responsibility for any unfortunate accidents. The German Government on their side expressly decline all responsibility for such accidents and their consequences." *

In addition it recommended that, if we entered the zone at all, "the United States convoy their ships carrying peaceful cargoes," though it could not, even so, guarantee us from the danger of mines.

These were indeed strange statements coming from a Power which claimed to be contending for the freedom of the seas.

The United States took this in better part than might have been expected, and in its sincere desire to clear up a situation so fraught with dangerous possibilities, on February 20 tried to effect an arrangement between the belligerents, but was unsuccessful. Germany refused to give up the mines and Great Britain then refused to make the concessions demanded of her. The whole situation is summed up in

* *American Journal of International Law*, Special Supplement, July, 1915, p. 93.

a declaration of the French Government communicated to us on March 30:

"Germany has declared the English Channel, the northern and western coasts of France, as well as the waters surrounding the British Isles to be a 'war zone,' and has officially proclaimed that 'all enemy vessels found in this zone will be destroyed and that neutral vessels there might be in danger.' This is in reality a claim to torpedo at sight, without regard for the safety of crew and passengers, any merchant vessel under any flag. As it is not in the power of the German Admiralty to maintain any vessel on the surface of these waters, this attack can only be carried out by submarine means. International law and the custom of nations regarding attack against commerce have always presumed that the first duty of the captor of a merchant vessel is to take it before a prize court where it can be judged, where the regularity of the capture can be determined, and where neutrals may recover their cargo. To sink a captured vessel is in itself a questionable act, to which recourse can be had only under extraordinary circumstances and after measures have been taken to assure the safety of all the crew and the passengers, if there are passengers on board. The responsibility of distinguishing between neutral and enemy cargo, as well as between neutral and enemy vessels, is manifestly incumbent on the attacking vessel,

whose duty it is to verify the status and the character of the vessel and its cargo, as well as to place all papers in safety, before sinking or even making a capture. Also the duty toward humanity consisting in assuring the safety of crews of merchant vessels, whether they are neutral or enemy, is an obligation for every belligerent. It is on this basis that all previous discussions of the law aiming at regulating the conduct of war at sea have been conducted."*

Up to this point of the war we had been compelled to protest to both England and Germany. The English violations, however, had been due to what we believed unwarranted extensions of existing rights, and it is safe to say that in no case had English violations caused or threatened the lives of Americans. Germany on her own admission was departing from international law and entering upon a policy which must necessarily either cut off recognized neutral rights to travel on the seas or result in the death of neutral citizens. Our country was, therefore, in a state of keen tension which increased when an American citizen was drowned in the sinking of the *Falaba*, when

* *American Journal of International Law*, Special Supplement, July, 1915, p. 116.

three more died as the result of the torpedoing of the *Gulflight*, and when the American vessel *Cushing*, plainly flying the American flag, was bombed by a German seaplane.

In spite of such premonitions the American people learned in horrified amazement that on May 7 the great passenger steamer *Lusitania* had been sunk with 1,959 people on board, without warning, ten miles off the Irish coast. To make sure of his work, the submarine captain had fired two torpedoes and the great liner sank rapidly. It was impossible for many of the passengers and crew to take to the boats, and as the ship settled and sank many of the boats which had been launched were broken or capsized.

Notwithstanding what had been reported of German conduct in Belgium and invaded France, very few Americans had believed that any soldier or sailor would ever have dreamed of carrying out in such fashion the threat which had been made by Germany. In consequence the vessel had carried a large number of women and children, and 1,182 non-combatants lost their lives. The scene was indescribable. After

twenty-five centuries Æschylus's sad phrase had become truth, "the very seas were flowering with the dead." To add to the pity of it all, there were among the lost, in spite of the chivalry of the passengers, 286 women and 94 children. For days the drowned who could be recovered from the boats or the sea were brought to the neighboring coast towns, while Americans anxiously scanned the lists for the names of friends to learn finally that 124 of our citizens, who had been guilty of no offense whatever, and were exercising a right accorded to all, had been murdered.

It is difficult to express the wave of feeling which passed through the American people, or to tell whether sorrow for the dead, horror at the deed, or righteous indignation against the perpetrators prevailed.

The least that can be said is that the act was universally condemned by the American and the neutral press and public. Perhaps fortunately, Congress was not in session, and Congress alone can declare war. Many believed that an extra session should have been immediately called for this purpose. In the mean-

time all sorts of suggestions were made: that we seize Germany's interned merchant and naval fleet, that we immediately sever diplomatic and commercial relations, that we refuse longer to safeguard Germany's interest in belligerent countries, that we mobilize the fleet and form a league of neutral nations. Had the President or his advisers had the slightest desire for war, the state of the country was such that it could undoubtedly have been declared. Nations had gone to war for far less, and we had announced that we would hold the German Government to "strict accountability."

The country was, however, held in check by the calmness and self-possession of the President who did not want war, had not wanted it, and was not to enter upon it until there was no possible alternative.

To understand the situation we must see for a moment how Germany took the news. It certainly came as no surprise to her rulers. A medal was struck off to commemorate this German success, and it is a curious fact that that medal bears the date not of May 7, but May 5. This may have been due to error of

the artist, but it is probable that it had been calculated that the *Lusitania* would be sunk on that date and that, with German thoroughness, the medal had been prepared in advance.

A Berlin despatch to the *Exchange Telegraph* via Amsterdam ran: "The Emperor drove to the Ministry of Marine to-day for a conference with Admiral von Tirpitz. The greatest enthusiasm was displayed here over the sinking of the *Lusitania*, demonstrations being held before the government buildings. The sinking of the *Lusitania* has made the Germans forget Italy." (Italy had just issued demands upon Austria which were to result in war.)

Count von Reventlow announced that:

"It is the American Government's own fault if it did not take Germany's war zone declaration seriously enough."

The *Kölnische Volkszeitung* of May 10, 1915, declared:

"The sinking of the *Lusitania* is a success for our submarines which must be placed beside the greatest achievements in the naval war. . . . The sinking of the great British steamer is a success the moral significance of

which is still greater than the material success. With joyful pride we contemplate this latest deed of our Navy, and it will not be the last."

The city of Magdeburg distinguished itself by proposing to honor the actual murderers. From that place, on May 19, came the news that a committee had been formed for the purpose of collecting money as a national gift for the officers and crew of the submarine which sent the *Lusitania* to the bottom and slaughtered so many defenseless men, women, and children of many nations.*

The German press which unanimously supported where it did not applaud its government laid the blame on England or upon America itself, and felt in any case that Germany had been completely justified by the fact that the following notice had appeared in the New York papers:

"NOTICE

"TRAVELERS intending to embark on the Atlantic voyage are reminded that a state of war exists between Germany and her allies and Great Britain and her allies; that the zone

* "Murder at Sea," by A. Hurd, p. 14.

of war includes the waters adjacent to the British Isles; that, in accordance with formal notice given by the Imperial German Government, vessels flying the flag of Great Britain, or of any of her allies, are liable to destruction in those waters and that travellers sailing in the war zone on ships of Great Britain or her allies do so at their own risk."

This was an astounding document to have issued from an embassy, for it amounted to a direct appeal on the part of a foreign ambassador from our government to the American people. In the previous negotiations we have seen that the President had refused to recognize the war zone proclaimed by Germany, and this procedure was parallel to that for which Citizen Genêt had been dismissed in the infancy of our republic. It was an affront direct. This notice had appeared the morning of the *Lusitania's* sailing and most Americans did not believe that it could be a *bona fide* communication from an ambassador. But it is no justification for murder, to have issued a warning and Germany's notice from the embassy did not excuse, it merely officially confirmed her guilt; it proved premeditation. When excited groups of reporters crowded

around the German ambassador, who was at that time in New York, and told him that as over one hundred Americans had been killed, the American people thought he ought to make a statement, Von Bernstorff shouted: "Let 'em think!" Bernard Dernburg further helped to excite public opinion by justifying the act; as a result of which he made himself impossible and either on his own motion or by request, returned to Germany. Secretary of War Garrison postponed his trip to Alabama and remained in Washington. No one seemed more deliberate or calm than the President, and on the following day he kept his engagement to deliver an address in Philadelphia. His attitude did much to relieve the tension and his first *Lusitania* note which was despatched on May 13, was received with general satisfaction by the country, which was determined that America should not be terrorized into submission. The basis of America's previous protests was repeated and the note concluded:

"The Government of the United States, therefore, desires to call the attention of the Imperial German Government with the ut-

most earnestness to the fact that the objection to their present method of attack against the trade of their enemies lies in the practical impossibility of employing submarines in the destruction of commerce without disregarding those rules of fairness, reason, justice, and humanity which all modern opinion regards as imperative. It is practically impossible for the officers of a submarine to visit a merchantman at sea and examine her papers and cargo. It is practically impossible for them to make a prize of her; and, if they cannot put a prize crew on board of her, they cannot sink her without leaving her crew and all on board of her to the mercy of the sea in her small boats. These facts, it is understood, the Imperial German Government frankly admit. We are informed that in the instances of which we have spoken time enough for even that poor measure of safety was not given, and in at least two of the cases cited not so much as a warning was received. Manifestly submarines cannot be used against merchantmen, as the last few weeks have shown, without an inevitable violation of many sacred principles of justice and humanity.

"American citizens act within their indisputable rights in taking their ships and in travelling wherever their legitimate business calls them upon the high seas, and exercise those rights in what should be the well-justified confidence that their lives will not be endangered by acts done in clear violation of uni-

versally acknowledged international obligations, and certainly in the confidence that their own Government will sustain them in the exercise of their rights.

"It (the United States Government) confidently expects, therefore, that the Imperial German Government will disavow the acts of which the Government of the United States complains, that they will make reparation so far as reparation is possible for injuries which are without measure, and that they will take immediate steps to prevent the recurrence of anything so obviously subversive of the principles of warfare for which the Imperial German Government have in the past so wisely and so firmly contended.

"The Imperial German Government will not expect the Government of the United States to omit any word or any act necessary to the performance of its sacred duty of maintaining the rights of the United States and its citizens and of safeguarding their free exercise and enjoyment."

In its reply the German Government failed to answer our note but attempted to make light of the case by alleging facts of which we were ignorant.

"The Government of the United States proceeds on the assumption that the *Lusitania*

is to be considered as an ordinary unarmed merchant vessel. The Imperial Government begs in this connection to point out that the *Lusitania* was one of the largest and fastest English commerce steamers, constructed with Government funds as auxiliary cruisers, and is expressly included in the navy list published by British Admiralty. It is moreover known to the Imperial Government from reliable information furnished by its officials and neutral passengers that for some time practically all the more valuable English merchant vessels have been provided with guns, ammunition, and other weapons, and reinforced with a crew specially practiced in manning guns. According to reports at hand here, the *Lusitania* when she left New York undoubtedly had guns on board which were mounted under decks and masked. . . . Lastly, the Imperial Government must specially point out that on her last trip the *Lusitania*, as on earlier occasions, had Canadian troops and munitions on board, including no less than 5,400 cases of ammunition destined for the destruction of brave German soldiers who are fulfilling with self-sacrifice and devotion their duty in the service of the Fatherland."

These statements were later proved untrue, though the German embassy hastened to procure a witness through Koenig, head of the Hamburg-American secret service, who swore

that he had been on the *Lusitania* before its departure and had seen guns there. His testimony had been fabricated, and Koenig and Bernstorff were probably aware of the fact, for the witness was later convicted of perjury when it was proved that he had not been on board the vessel; and the collector of the port who had inspected the *Lusitania* before her departure, testified that she had neither guns, ammunition nor troops aboard her.

For this reason our government forwarded a second note on June 9, which proved the German statements mistaken and insisted pressingly on the representations of the first note. It brought the discussion back sharply and pointedly to the main issue, in the following terms:

"Whatever be the other facts regarding the *Lusitania*, the principal fact is that a great steamer, primarily and chiefly a conveyance for passengers, and carrying more than a thousand souls who had no part or lot in the conduct of the war, was torpedoed and sunk without so much as a challenge or a warning, and that men, women, and children were sent to their death in circumstances unparalleled in

modern warfare. The fact that more than one hundred American citizens were among those who perished made it the duty of the Government of the United States to speak of these things and once more, with solemn emphasis, to call the attention of the Imperial German Government to the grave responsibility which the Government of the United States conceives that it has incurred in this tragic occurrence, and to the indisputable principle upon which that responsibility rests. The Government of the United States is contending for something much greater than mere rights of property or privileges of commerce. It is contending for nothing less high and sacred than the rights of humanity, which every Government honors itself in respecting and which no Government is justified in resigning on behalf of those under its care and authority. Only her actual resistance to capture or refusal to stop when ordered to do so for the purpose of visit could have afforded the commander of the submarine any justification for so much as putting the lives of those on board the ship in jeopardy."

On the occasion of the sending of this note, Secretary Bryan, who had signed our first communication, resigned from the cabinet, as he was not in sympathy with the method pursued, though future developments convinced the pub-

lic of the accuracy of his statement issued in explanation:

"The President and I agree in purpose; we desire a peaceful solution of the dispute which has arisen between the United States and Germany."

Germany's refusal to make immediate amends after this unparalleled offense would have made peace impossible had this not been the case, for in spite of the directness of our second communication, Berlin's answer of July 8 was rambling and not responsive. It insisted on the traditional friendliness of Germany to the American people; reasserted that she was waging a war of self-defense; and explained that the loss of life could hardly be chargeable to her. The reason for the rapid sinking of the vessel was due to circumstances of a very peculiar kind, especially "the presence on board of large quantities of highly explosive materials."

Her inability to understand the issue is perhaps nowhere more strikingly brought out than in the amazing statement that "the case of

the *Lusitania* shows with horrible clearness to what jeopardizing of human lives the manner of conducting war employed by our adversaries leads." One might imagine that the friendly German Government had been joining the United States in a protest against British inhumanity for killing a hundred Americans. It then proposed two methods by which Americans could pass through the danger zone, though none of these could have been accepted without surrendering the right for which we contended.

It was perfectly plain from the tenor of these two replies that the German party in power was committed to submarine warfare, and that if they spared Americans at all it would be through no considerations for humanity or international law.

The American rejoinder brought the case up again sharply and strongly:

"The Government of the United States is, however, keenly disappointed to find that the Imperial German Government regards itself as in large degree exempt from the obligation to observe these principles, even when neutral

vessels are concerned, by what it believes the policy and practice of the Government of Great Britain to be in the present war with regard to neutral commerce. The Imperial German Government will readily understand that the Government of the United States cannot discuss the policy of the Government of Great Britain with regard to neutral trade except with that Government itself, and that it must regard the conduct of other belligerent governments as irrelevant to any discussion with the Imperial German Government of what this Government regards as grave and unjustifiable violations of the rights of American citizens by German naval commanders. . . .

"If a belligerent cannot retaliate against an enemy without injuring the lives of neutrals, as well as their property, humanity, as well as justice and a due regard for the dignity of neutral powers, should dictate that the practice be discontinued. If persisted in it would in such circumstances constitute an unpardonable offense against the sovereignty of the neutral nation affected. . . . The rights of neutrals in time of war are based upon principle, not upon expediency, and the principles are immutable. It is the duty and obligation of belligerents to find a way to adapt the new circumstances to them.

"In view of the admission of illegality made by the Imperial Government when it pleaded the right of retaliation in defense of its acts, and in view of the manifest possibility of con-

forming to the established rules of naval warfare, the Government of the United States cannot believe that the Imperial Government will longer refrain from disavowing the wanton act of its naval commander in sinking the *Lusitania* or from offering reparation for the American lives lost, so far as reparation can be made for a needless destruction of human life by an illegal act. . . . Friendship itself prompts it to say to the Imperial Government that repetition by the commanders of German naval vessels of acts in contravention of those rights must be regarded by the Government of the United States, when they affect American citizens, as deliberately unfriendly."

This note, forceful and direct, admitted of no misinterpretation or evasion. After the despatch of our first protest a conversation between Secretary of State Bryan and Ambassador Dumba had been interpreted in such a way as to make the Central Powers assume that it had been written merely to satisfy American opinion. Any such view was now dispelled. The American position was very clearly outlined and the phrase "deliberately unfriendly" in diplomatic correspondence is not to be taken lightly. Until Germany's reply to this it would be taken for granted that the American posi-

tion was accepted and so the case stood for some time. The next step in the negotiations was reached when Von Bernstorff in a note on September 1, 1915, informed Secretary Lansing that he had received the following promise from his government: "Liners will not be sunk by our submarines without warning and with safety of the lives of the non-combatants, providing that the latter do not try to escape or offer resistance." Further discussions were conducted in Washington between Bernstorff and Secretary Lansing and finally Germany offered to pay an indemnity for the death of the Americans on the *Lusitania,* which she "greatly regretted," though she refused to disavow the action of the submarine commander or to admit that his act was illegal.

CHAPTER VII

THE *SUSSEX* AND THE SUBMARINES

THE promise made by the German Government on September 1, 1915, to the effect that Germany would not sink liners without saving the lives of passengers was unfortunately a characteristic German promise. It had already been broken before we knew that it had ever been made. For on August 19, the liner *Arabic* had been sunk without warning with the loss of sixteen lives, two of which were American, and Von Bernstorff had been naïve enough to explain that the promise recorded above had already been made by his government before this unfortunate incident. A still-born promise of this sort was not calculated to inspire much confidence, and the situation in America generally was well reflected in the statement of President Wilson on September 13, 1915, to a delegation of Virginians who asked him to visit the Manassas battle-field. "We are hoping and praying," said he, "that the

skies may clear, but we have no control of that on this side of the water, and it is impossible to predict any part of the course of affairs." In other words, the issue was with Germany. We were standing for the maintenance of our rights as neutrals and would continue to observe strict neutrality unless too grossly interfered with. But in spite of the gravity of the situation, which was to be further reflected in the President's addresses of the autumn, he was not willing to allow himself to be rushed off his feet. Nothing illustrates his patience with Germany nor his calmness more clearly than the waiting attitude which he pursued under repeated minor provocations, springing from Germany's submarine policy. We have seen that in the sinking of the *Arabic* two Americans were lost; in the case of the *Ancona*, November 10, eleven; in the case of the *Persia*, on December 30, two (one of them an American consular official). Besides these cases, in which lives were lost either as the result of German or Austrian torpedoing, there were numerous other cases which became the subject of diplomatic correspondence. Yet no new

issue was drawn and no crisis created, through the extreme forbearance of our government, which, after the strong and explicit language of the *Lusitania* note, was regarded by many Americans as undignified and unworthy of a great Power.

A new question was, however, to be raised with regard to the arming of merchantmen for defensive purposes. This right had always been conceded in international law, as we may judge from the following statement of Doctor Hans Wehberg, a German authority: "The enemy merchant ship has the right of defense against belligerent attack, and this right it can exercise against visit, for this indeed is the first act of capture. The attacked merchant ship can, indeed, itself seize the overpowered war-ship as a prize." *

This naturally implied the right of such vessels to arm, a right which had been given them in international law in order that they might defend themselves against pirates, and also in order that a swift yacht carrying a few men

**American Journal of International Law*, p. 871.

and mounting a gun might not capture great steamers and their crews. Such a rule of international law could not be changed, except by the agreement of all the belligerents, and our government attempted to bring about an abandonment of this right by all of them on condition that submarines sink no vessels save after visit and search. In this effort Washington was unsuccessful and therefore, naturally, firmly took its stand on the law which permitted such defensive armament. Germany early in 1916 announced that she would treat any enemy merchant ships bearing arms as ships of war. This was a clear violation of established principle in case merchant vessels carried a gun mounted aft for defensive purposes only. But in February, 1916, Representative McLemore introduced into Congress a resolution warning Americans not to travel upon any armed merchant ship lest they lose their lives and provoke a war. This was in direct contradiction of the ruling of the State Department, which had announced on February 15 that commercial vessels had the right to arm defensively. Those in favor of modifying

international law in the interest of Germany, however, supported this resolution, though the President had himself indicated his personal opposition to it on the ground that neutral subjects have a clear right to safe travel on a merchant vessel of a belligerent even though the ship is defensively armed. He was insisting, in other words, that no belligerent should cause the loss of American lives against the principles of international law. Certain political groups tried to make it appear that the country was not behind the President, and he therefore insisted that the matter be brought to a vote, and the resolution was tabled on March 7, 1916, by a majority of 276 to 152.

But scarcely had this question been settled than the lawlessness of German submarine practices was illustrated again in the case of the passenger-boat *Sussex*, which was entirely unarmed, mounting not even a signal-gun, and used on the English Channel route from Folkestone to Dieppe. She was carrying over four hundred passengers, including twenty-five American citizens, and was attacked on March 24 by a German submarine, about three o'clock

in the afternoon, killing or injuring eighty persons, two of whom were Americans. The questions involved were clear. They had all been covered in the *Lusitania* case, and the act was in evident violation of the German promises then made. It seemed that Germany was trying to discover whether America meant what she had said, and Germany had probably given her instructions to submarine commanders in the days when the McLemore resolution was still under discussion, and when a part of the American press was trying to prove that American sentiment was not behind the President.* This seems the more likely as Germany had given notice that after March 1 she would sink all armed enemy merchantmen without warning, and in the latter half of March a number of boats with Americans on board were torpedoed without warning, including the *Eagle Point*, the *Englishman*, and the *Manchester Engineer*. With regard to the *Sussex*, therefore, the State Department immediately directed an inquiry to Berlin to ascertain officially

* The part played by German propagandists in this connection will be discussed in Chapter VIII.

whether a German submarine had been responsible for the sinking. There was from the first no real doubt as to this question, since the torpedo had been observed as it approached the vessel and the captain had sharply turned the *Sussex* in an unsuccessful effort to avoid it. Ambassador Gerard had to make repeated requests before the Foreign Office finally procured from the admiralty on the 10th of April a report of the torpedoing. The report was of the disingenuous sort which we had unfortunately come to expect from the German Foreign Office. Its denial of having caused the sinking was so improbable as to seem grotesque in an official communication. The statement was designed to mislead, since the facts must have been known by the German navy, as the submarine had remained in the neighborhood after torpedoing the *Sussex* and had even attempted to sink another British vessel which was seeking to rescue a boat-load of the survivors. The denial was unavailing, however, for though the forward part of the *Sussex* had been blown off she stayed afloat long enough to be towed to Boulogne, and American naval officers de-

A number of boats with Americans on board were torpedoed without warning.

tailed to investigate discovered in the vessel unmistakable portions of the exploded German torpedo.

After establishing the facts in the case, Washington sent a note to Berlin, pointing out "that the Imperial Government has failed to appreciate the gravity of the situation which has resulted, not alone from the attack on the *Sussex* but from the whole method and character of submarine warfare, as disclosed by the unrestrained practice of commanders of German undersea craft during the past twelve months and more in the indiscriminating destruction of merchant vessels of all sorts, nationalities, and destinations." It continued to give a résumé of the deliberate and wholesale method of destruction which had become more and more unmistakable as the activities of German undersea vessels of war had in recent months been extended. It then reviewed the negotiations between the United States and Germany, and showed that the limitations which the Imperial Government had promised to put upon her submarine commanders had been regularly ignored, in a manner which the

United States could not but regard as wanton and without the slightest color of justification. "No limit," it continued, "of any kind has in fact been set to their indiscriminate pursuit and destroying of merchantmen of all kinds and nationalities," and "the roll of Americans who have lost their lives upon ships thus attacked and destroyed had grown from month to month until the ominous toll has mounted into the hundreds." The note then concluded in a tone and with statements that gave it the character of an ultimatum.

"The Government of the United States has been very patient. At every stage of this distressing experience of tragedy after tragedy it has sought to be governed by the most thoughtful consideration of the extraordinary circumstances of an unprecedented war and to be guided by sentiments of very genuine friendship for the people and Government of Germany. It has accepted the successive explanations and assurances of the Imperial Government as of course given in entire sincerity and good faith, and has hoped, even against hope, that it would prove to be possible for the Imperial Government so to order and control the acts of its naval commanders as to square its policy with the recognized principles of humanity as embodied

in the law of nations. It has made every allowance for unprecedented conditions and has been willing to wait until the facts became unmistakable and were susceptible of only one interpretation.

"It now owes it to a just regard for its own rights to say to the Imperial Government that that time has come. It has become painfully evident to it that the position which it took at the very outset is inevitable, namely, the use of submarines for the destruction of an enemy's commerce, is, of necessity, because of the very character of the vessels employed and the very methods of attack which their employment of course involves, utterly incompatible with the principles of humanity, the long-established and incontrovertible rights of neutrals, and the sacred immunities of non-combatants.

"If it is still the purpose of the Imperial Government to prosecute relentless and indiscriminate warfare against vessels of commerce by the use of submarines without regard to what the Government of the United States must consider the sacred and indisputable rules of international law and the universally recognized dictates of humanity, the Government of the United States is at last forced to the conclusion that there is but one course it can pursue. Unless the Imperial Government should now immediately declare and effect an abandonment of its present methods of submarine warfare against passenger and freight-carrying

vessels, the Government of the United States can have no choice but to sever diplomatic relations with the German Empire altogether. This action the Government of the United States contemplates with the greatest reluctance but feels constrained to take in behalf of humanity and the rights of neutral nations."*

The German reply of May 4, 1916, makes a painful impression. Germany had evidently been stung to the quick, for her tergiversating answer to our inquiry had failed to shake our certitude of her responsibility, and the plain statement of facts in our review of the situation amounted to a direct accusation of inhumanity and lawlessness. Her answer was, therefore, given in anger, not in sorrow. It included, in addition to paradoxical protestations of her entire innocence and of her humanity to non-combatants, accusations against the United States for failing to accept previous proposals of hers and especially accusations against British inhumanity and our own partiality to Britain. But it evidently recognized the gravity of the crisis and contained the following promises:

**American Journal of International Law*, Special Supplement, October, 1916, p. 190.

"The German Government, guided by this idea, notifies the Government of the United States that the German naval forces have received the following orders: In accordance with the general principles of visit and search and destruction of merchant vessels recognized by international law, such vessels, both within and without the area declared as naval war zone, shall not be sunk without warning and without saving human lives, unless these ships attempt to escape or offer resistance.

"But neutrals can not expect that Germany, forced to fight for her existence, shall, for the sake of neutral interest, restrict the use of an effective weapon if her enemy is permitted to continue to apply at will methods of warfare violating the rules of international law. Such a demand would be incompatible with the character of neutrality, and the German Government is convinced that the Government of the United States does not think of making such a demand, knowing that the Government of the United States has repeatedly declared that it is determined to restore the principle of the freedom of the seas, from whatever quarter it is violated." *

It will be seen that Germany, though making a definite promise not to sink merchantmen without warning or without saving human lives,

* *American Journal of International Law*, Special Supplement, October, 1916, pp. 198–199.

attempted to make this promise contingent upon some action on our part against Great Britain.

This would have made it possible for Germany to reopen the question in case negotiations between the United States and Great Britain were not settled to her satisfaction. Washington was, however, determined that this dangerous question should be settled finally and not conditionally. In the last paragraph of the American reply, therefore, this point was made an issue, and any such interpretation of the promise was specifically precluded. The communication was sent to Berlin on May 8, 1916, and read as follows:

"DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
WASHINGTON, May 8, 1916.

"You are instructed to deliver to the Minister of Foreign Affairs a communication textually as follows:

"'The note of the Imperial German Government under date of May 4, 1916, has received careful consideration by the Government of the United States. It is especially noted, as indicating the purpose of the Imperial Government as to the future, that it "is prepared to do its utmost to confine the operations of the war for the rest of its duration to the fighting forces of the belligerents," and that it is determined to impose upon all its commanders at sea the limi-

tations of the recognized rules of international law upon which the Government of the United States insisted. Throughout the months which have elapsed since the Imperial Government announced, on February 4, 1915, its submarine policy, now happily abandoned, the Government of the United States has been constantly guided and restrained by motives of friendship in its patient efforts to bring to an amicable settlement the critical questions arising from that policy. Accepting the Imperial Government's declaration of its abandonment of the policy which has so seriously menaced the good relations between the two countries, the Government of the United States will rely upon a scrupulous execution henceforth of the now altered policy of the Imperial Government, such as will remove the principal danger to an interruption of the good relations existing between the United States and Germany.

"'The Government of the United States feels it necessary to state that it takes it for granted that the Imperial German Government does not intend to imply that the maintenance of its newly announced policy is in any way contingent upon the course or result of diplomatic negotiations between the Government of the United States and any other belligerent Government, notwithstanding the fact that certain passages in the Imperial Government's note of the 4th instant might appear to be susceptible of that construction. In order, however, to avoid any possible misunderstanding, the Government of the United States notifies the Impe-

rial Government that it can not for a moment entertain, much less discuss, a suggestion that respect by German naval authorities for the rights of citizens of the United States upon the high seas should in any way or in the slightest degree be made contingent upon the conduct of any other Government affecting the rights of neutrals and noncombatants. Responsibility in such matters is single, not joint; absolute, not relative.'

"LANSING."*

If Germany was unwilling to accept this interpretation it would be necessary for her to reopen the question. She did not do so and this, therefore, meant that she accepted the American position.

In spite of past experiences the United States accepted this promise in good faith. The spirit of fairness which was always manifested toward Germany was further illustrated in the ruling on the case of the *Deutschland*, the large commercial submarine which brought two cargoes of goods from Germany to American ports in this same year.

The Allied governments sent notes to the neutral powers stating that, in view of the fact that it was impossible to distinguish the na-

* *American Journal of International Law*, Special Supplement, October, 1916, pp. 199–200.

tionality of undersea boats or to determine whether they were armed or unarmed, belligerent submarine vessels, whatever the purpose to which they are put, be excluded from neutral waters, roadsteads, and ports. This would have excluded the *Deutschland* from our harbors. Instead of complying, Secretary Lansing ruled in favor of treating the submarine like any other vessel, since "the Government of the United States is at present not aware of any circumstances concerning the use of war or merchant submarines which have rendered the existing rules of international law inapplicable to them." Indeed, we made no protest, though many Americans felt we should have done so when, on October 7, the large *U*-53 came into the harbor at Newport, and a day later sank three British and two neutral steamers between sixty and one hundred miles from the shore. The submarine set the passengers, of whom many were Americans returning from Newfoundland, adrift in small boats, in which a number might have been lost but for the rescue work of the Newport destroyer flotilla. Here the situation was to rest without any further serious crisis until early in 1917.

CHAPTER VIII

GERMAN INTRIGUE

IN addition to Germany's inhumane conduct in Belgium and on the seas, there was yet another factor which contributed to discredit her in American eyes and to force America first to regard her with suspicion and later to distrust her in word and act. This third factor is in its nature more or less imponderable, and it is difficult to calculate its importance in our government's decisions. We may say that in general it was the result of that large category of underhand activities which were entered upon by German officials either for the purpose of deliberately deceiving or of unduly influencing us in favor of the German cause or government. In pursuing this policy of intrigue and espionage Germany did not hesitate to resort to means which were dishonorable and illegal, and in many cases involved such serious affronts to our sovereignty that in the past we had dis-

missed the representatives of foreign Powers for having countenanced or engaged in them.

In 1805, for instance, the Spanish minister at Washington, the Marquis of Casa Yrujo tampered with the American press, and attempted to bribe a Philadelphia editor to present the Spanish side of a controversy with the United States. Passports were issued to him and he was dismissed by the infant republic. Nor did we grow less jealous of our sovereign rights with age. During a political campaign the British ambassador, Lord Sackville-West, in reply to a letter, advised Americans of British birth to vote for Grover Cleveland. When, after the election, the incident came to light, President Cleveland characterized it in his annual message as, "unpardonable conduct," and explained that, "the offense thus committed was more grave, involving disastrous possibilities to the good relations of the United States and Great Britain, constituting a gross breach of diplomatic privilege and an invasion of the purely domestic affairs and essential sovereignty of the government to which the envoy was accredited."

President Cleveland, therefore, directed that passports be issued to Lord Sackville-West, and Secretary of State Bayard held that circumstances involving interference with American suffrage left no other course open to the United States.

In what follows it will be plain that the offenses committed by Lord Sackville-West and the Marquis of Casa Yrujo were the merest peccadillos compared with the systematic attempts of Germany to influence American suffrage and to disregard the sovereign rights of our government.

The field covered by this underhand activity was so large and the means employed so varied that to treat it in all its phases would demand separate volumes. It was furthermore in many cases so cleverly concealed that much of it has not yet come to light, and more than a year after our entrance into the war the trials and confessions of prisoners and suspected persons disclosed almost daily further ramifications of this organized secret plotting.* Thus, for instance, on July 11, 1918, at the investigation in New York when Senator King demanded

* *Cf.* the files of the New York *Times* for July, 1918.

that the government conduct an investigation into the report that $30,000,000 had been used in that city for purchasing newspapers and spreading propaganda, Deputy Attorney-General Becker made the statement that not only this sum but "untold millions," had been put at the disposal of the German agents as a "slush fund." He further announced that at least sixteen New York banks had acted as depositaries for German funds, and that an investigation was pending to discover how the amounts drawn from these accounts by Ambassador von Bernstorff and his aides had been employed.

We are forced to restrict ourselves, therefore, to noting merely some of the characteristic aspects of this wide-spread plot, and in doing so we shall confine ourselves to cases that have been proven by documentary evidence now in the possession of the government. Many of them have been drawn from the careful analysis of the earlier activities of German agents prepared by Professors Sperry and West.* In no cases shall we deal with the ac-

* "German Plots and Intrigue in the United States during the Period of our Neutrality." Committee on Public Information, Washington.

tivity, even the treasonable acitivity, of isolated and overzealous German sympathizers. Every instance which follows was undertaken at the suggestion or with the knowledge and connivance, often the direct collaboration of German Government officials. Where funds were necessary they were provided by them.

The "commander-in-chief" of this organization was Count von Bernstorff, the German ambassador. Until his dismissal Doctor Dumba, the Austro-Hungarian ambassador was his coadjutor, and his chief lieutenants were Captain von Papen, military attaché, and Captain Boy-Ed, naval attaché of the German embassy. They were assisted by Doctor Albert, the commerical attaché and Wolf von Igel, secretary to Von Papen, all of them enjoying diplomatic status and diplomatic immunity. Under them served most of the German and Austrian consuls in this country, a large number of German reservists, hired American journalists, and an odd collection of agitators and desperadoes drawn often from the lowest classes.

The following recital of what was done and the methods employed will be sufficient to show

the lack of honor and conscience of the German Government. We have already considered the character of German political morality. It need occasion no astonishment, therefore, if a few selected messages and documents prove that this whole underhand system of violence and deceit was merely an extension of the work of the German Foreign Office and the General Staff.

On November 2, 1914, a circular order was issued from the German General Headquarters, "to the military representative on the Russian and French fronts, as well as in Italy and Norway," and it is not improbable that one to the same purport was sent to America. It read:

"In all branch establishments of German banking houses in Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, China, and the United States, special military accounts have been opened for special war necessities. Main headquarters authorizes you to use these credits to an unlimited extent for the purpose of destroying factories, workshops, camps, and the most important centres of military and civil supply belonging to the enemy. In addition to the incitement of labor troubles, measures must be taken for the damag-

ing of engines and machinery plants, the destruction of vessels carrying war material to enemy countries, the burning of stocks of raw materials and finished goods, and the depriving of large industrial centres of electric power, fuel, and food. Special agents, who will be placed at your disposal, will supply you with the necessary means for effecting explosions and fires, as well as with a list of people in the country under your supervision who are willing to undertake the task of destruction.

"(Signed) Dr. E. Fischer."

So general an order, if sent to America, was, however, not sufficient. More definite instructions on the various phases of the work were from time to time forwarded from Berlin to Von Bernstorff. A few sample messages which in one way or another came into our hands will establish the fact. The following are copies of two telegrams sent to the German ambassador:

"Jan. 3 (1916). (Secret.) General Staff desires energetic action in regard to proposed destruction of Canadian Pacific Railway at several points with a view to complete and protracted interruption of traffic. Captain Boehm, who is known on your side and shortly

returning, has been given instructions. Inform the Military Attaché and provide the necessary funds.

"(Signed) ZIMMERMANN."

"Jan. 26 (1916). For Military Attaché. You can obtain particulars as to persons suitable for carrying on sabotage in the United States and Canada from the following persons: (1) Joseph McGarrity, Philadelphia, Penn. (2) John P. Keating, Michigan Avenue, Chicago. (3) Jeremiah O'Leary, 16 Park Row, New York. One and two are absolutely reliable and discreet. No. 3 is reliable, but not always discreet. These persons were indicated by Sir Roger Casement. In the United States sabotage can be carried out on every kind of factory for supplying munitions of war. Railway embankments and bridges must not be touched. Embassy must in no circumstances be compromised. Similar precautions must be taken in regard to Irish pro-German propaganda.

"(Signed) REPRESENTATIVE OF GENERAL STAFF."

One of the many violations of our neutrality by Germany was her attempt to start military expeditions against her enemies from America. These plans likewise were directed from Berlin through Von Bernstorff, as is evi-

dent from the following telegram regarding the status of the organizer of the projected revolt in India:

"BERLIN, 4th February, 1916.

"*To the German Embassy, Washington:*

"In the future all Indian affairs are to be handled through the Committee to be formed by Dr. Chakraberty. Dhirenda Sarkar and Heramba Lal Gupta who has meanwhile been expelled from Japan, will cease to be independent representatives of the Indian Independence Committee existing here.

"ZIMMERMANN."

There can, therefore, be no doubt that this plot, as President Wilson subsequently said of the German plot generally, "had its heart in Berlin." Like a gigantic octopus it sprawled over our entire country and stretched out its tentacles into every form of our national life. It touched our Congress, our diplomacy, our industry, our press. Indeed so multiform and all-pervasive was it that if we merely sketch a few of its more pronounced phases, it must be understood that they all worked in together

and were designed to nullify our neutrality, our national will, indeed our sovereignty.

These attacks upon us through German underhand diplomacy may be said to have been made along five converging lines. In the first place, they sought through various channels to pervert American opinion and legislation to German ends by the employment of immense sums of money. In the second, they sought to give illegal military aid to Germany directly. In the third place, they attempted to use the United States as a base for German military operations. In the fourth place, they attempted to interfere with American industries, especially the manufacture of munitions and their transportation on land and water in order to prevent our resources from being of value to the Allies. In the fifth place, to crown their structure of intrigue they elaborated a system of underhand diplomacy through which they hoped to foment trouble between America and the Allies generally, and particularly to embroil the United States in a war with Mexico and Japan.

This pyramid of plot and intrigue had as its base a wide-spread plan to poison public

opinion* in which probably not less than $50,000,000 was spent through Ambassador von Bernstorff, Doctor Dernburg, the former German Colonial Secretary, and their aides. In addition to their German assistants there were employed a number of American journalists, correspondents, and lecturers like Doctor William Bayard Hale, Mr. J. F. J. Archibald, to whom at least one check for $5,000 was given for "propaganda work," and Edwin Emerson, who received $1,000 for "travelling expenses," and many others. Not content with this, however, they bought up and subsidized newspapers throughout the land. It is difficult to follow all of their activities in connection with the foreign-language press already existing in this country, or to know in how many cases they succeeded in bribing editors of our journals in English. Their general procedure is indi-

* That the German Government had for many years been employing debatable methods in this regard is painfully evident in the account by Witte, attached for a time, when he was supposed to be only a foreign correspondent, as publicity agent to the German Embassy (1902). His book was written as an attack upon Holleben, and is evidently controversial and the work of a mind diseased. This portion of it must be taken with serious reservations. The account of the means and instruments employed to influence American opinion is incidental, and this, with documents cited, is sufficient to arouse astonishment. (*Aus Einer Deutschen Botschaft*, Leipzig, 1907.)

cated, however, by the check for $5,000 which Count von Bernstorff sent to Marcus Brown, editor of *Fair Play*,* the monthly subsidy of $1,750 delivered to Mr. George Sylvester Viereck, editor of *The Fatherland*, by the commercial attaché Albert, and the similar monthly subsidy of $1,500 paid to the *American Independent*, by Consul-General Bopp of San Francisco. Of the newspapers bought outright by the German Government, and continued ostensibly as American organs of opinion, the most important was the *Evening Mail* of New York, for which about $1,500,000 of a seemingly inexhaustible fund was spent.

To assist in this attempt at perverting American opinion there were founded or encouraged societies, seemingly American, to influence sentiment and legislation. The most important of these was perhaps the *German-American National Alliance*, which had already been in existence for the purpose of spreading German influence in America, and which they sought

* It has recently (August, 1918) become evident that, in addition to the check paid to the editor, the German ambassador purchased the stock of *Fair Play*, financially a losing venture, for $15,000, through an American intermediary. (*Cf.* New York *Times* files for August, 1918.)

to make a power in politics.* A second, founded for the more immediate purpose of influencing Congress was *Labor's National Peace Council*, which was financed by Emperor Wilhelm's friend and personal agent, Franz von Rintelen. A third was the *American Embargo Conference*, which was established to make a determined and concerted effort to prevent the export of munitions after our government had decided that this was entirely proper within the limits of our neutrality. Another means employed by the *Embargo Conference* was that of distributing to voters over 5,000,000 telegrams to

* A striking change in Germany's attitude toward Germans who had emigrated to America is noticeable after about 1900, at the time when the Pan-German movement began to gain momentum. Earlier they had frequently been treated as renegades. After this period, particularly after Prince Henry's visit in 1902, every attempt was made to strengthen their loyalty to the fatherland. The promotion of societies among them was encouraged, and flags were often presented to the American societies of German veterans, *Landwehr-Vereine*, by the German Emperor through his ambassador. (*Cf. Aus Einer Deutschen Botschaft*, by Emil Witte, Leipzig, 1907, chap. VII). The teaching of German in American schools was pushed and German-language papers encouraged and, it would seem, subsidized. The leaders of the German-American movement frequently received decorations from Berlin. In his "Life of John Hay," vol. II, p. 290, Thayer says, and we think very truly: "Prince Henry's visit, however, was really intended to solidify the German-American movement in behalf of the Fatherland." The political purpose of the movement is plainer now than it was then, though Doctor von Holleben, German ambassador at that time, was bold enough to say to a reporter: "Any war between Germany and the United States would be in the character of a civil war." (*Cf.* Witte, *Aus Einer Deutschen Botschaft*, chap. II.)

be sent to Congress demanding an embargo on munitions. On a single day 250,000 identical messages poured into Washington, and in Chicago alone the *Conference* paid the telegraph companies about $20,000.

That the results were satisfactory to the German Government is evident from Count von Bernstorff's telegram of September 16, 1916, to the German Foreign Office: "The *Embargo Conference*, in regard to whose earlier fruitful co-operation Dr. Hale can give information, is just about to enter upon a vigorous campaign to secure a majority in both houses of Congress favorable to Germany and request further support. There is no possibility of our being compromised. Request telegraphic reply." This organization functioned to the very last months of the period of our neutrality and later Count von Bernstorff was again to telegraph Berlin for further sums to be spent on this and similar organizations which aimed to force pro-German policies through Congress.

"I request authority to pay out up to $50,000 (fifty thousand dollars) in order, as on former occasions to influence Congress through the

organization you know of, which can perhaps prevent war.

"I am beginning in the meantime to act accordingly.

"In the above circumstances a public official German declaration in favor of Ireland is highly desirable, in order to gain the support of the Irish influence here."

There is at present no doubt that actual bribery of Congress was intended by Franz von Rintelen, and it is very possible that the same was true in the case of Count von Bernstorff and his society. Both Congressman Buchanan, who was the president of *Labor's National Peace Council*, and Ex-Congressman Fowler received money for their assistance in attempting to bribe Congress.* Money was also advanced according to the testimony of Meloy to Lamar, "the Wolf of Wall Street,"† to be used in procuring the passage of resolutions by Congress which should embarrass the government in the conduct of its relations with Germany. In addition to their purposes in influencing public opinion and legislation these and like societies were also used for other ends which do not concern us here.

* *German Plots and Intrigues.* Issued by Committee on Public Information, p. 16.

† *Ibid.*

The second phase of German intrigue we have described is the attempt to give illegal military assistance to Germany, and the effort to do this assumed likewise various forms. We can deal with only two that are characteristic. Immediately after the beginning of the war the German Government, through the Hamburg-American Line and its officials in New York, endeavored to send coal and other supplies to German war-ships which were raiding commerce along both our coasts. Such action was a violation of American neutrality, and in order to evade the law the German agents detailed to this work took false oaths before Federal authorities concerning the nature, destination, and cargoes of their vessels. In addition to the aid and comfort given to Germany in this matter the plan was also aimed at causing friction between the United States and the countries with which it was at peace. Some of those implicated were convicted in December, 1915, of conspiracy to defraud the United States. The evidence at the trial proved that fraud and perjury were here, as in every phase of this German activity, committed under the direc-

tion of officials protected by the diplomatic privileges held sacred by other nations. Though the results were meagre, the copy of Captain Boy-Ed's account at a New York bank indicates that he paid the Hamburg-American Line more than $3,000,000 for furthering Germany's naval operations from the United States.

One of the phases of these efforts to give Germany direct military aid is more interesting than some, since it has its amusing side. In their eager desire to send troops and munitions to the Central Empires the German Embassy and its group of plotters overreached themselves very early in the game, and all the stages of their procedure were from the beginning known to our Department of Justice. In order to send German reservists abroad it was necessary that they be provided with American passports, and with true German efficiency, therefore, an office was established in New York through the German Embassy and directed by Captain von Papen, military attaché, where American passports were forged by wholesale. German consuls in distant cities like Chicago

and St. Paul were informed concerning this office and sent the reservists from their localities to the given address to be supplied. The operations were developed on so large a scale that the busy conspirators did not therefore notice the "infiltration" of a member of the United States Secret Service. They evidently believed that the United States, which submitted to much more serious offenses, would not object, and, unfortunately, this belief in our indulgence was not misplaced.

We have seen in the chapter on "Strict Neutrality" that as early as January 20, 1915, the Secretary of State had called attention to the fact that persons of German nationality, under pretense of being American citizens, had obtained American passports for the purpose of returning to Germany without molestation by her enemies, and that "there are indications that a systematic plan" had been devised to obtain American passports through fraud for the purpose of securing passage for German officers and reservists desiring to return to Germany, "and that such fraudulent use of passports by Germans can have no other effect than

to cast suspicion upon American passports in general." We have seen also that instead of taking any action against the German Embassy, which was discrediting American passports, our government merely made new regulations, and hoped that "this would prevent any further misuse of American passports."*

The "indications" that a systematic plan was on foot were plain indeed. Hans von Wedell, who had managed it under Captain von Papen, took alarm and fled in November, 1914, with money supplied by his employer. There could have been no doubt as to the complicity of the German Embassy in the business, for the following letter from Von Wedell was in the possession of our secret service:

"*His Excellency, the Imperial German Ambassador, Count von Bernstorff,*
Washington, D. C.:

" . . . My work was done. At my departure, I left the service well organized, and

* What discredit had been thrown upon all American passports by this counterfeiting is readily apparent. We give but a single instance. Mr. Arthur Gleason, a former correspondent and worker for the Red Cross, writes as follows:

"In October, 1914, two miles outside Ostend, I was arrested as a spy by the Belgians, and marched through the streets in front of a gun in the hands of a very young and very nervous soldier. The État-Major

worked out in minute detail, in the hands of my successor, Mr. Karl Ruroede, picked out by myself. . . . Also, Ruroede will testify to you that without my preliminary labors it would be impossible for him, as well as for Mr. von Papen, to forward officers in any way whatever. . . . Ten days before my departure I learned from a telegram sent me by Mr. von Papen . . . that Dr. Starck had fallen into the hands of the British. That gentleman's forged papers were liable to come back and could . . . be traced to me. Mr. von Papen had repeatedly and urgently ordered me to hide myself. Mr. Igel told me that I was taking the matter altogether too lightly, and that I ought, for God's sake, to disappear. . . .

"With expressions of the most exquisite consideration, I am your Excellency's,

"Very respectfully,

"(Signed) HANS ADAM VON WEDELL."

Hans von Wedell had in the words of the song gone and ta'en his wages (we know that in one month Von Papen had advanced to him nearly $3,000), but the office under his successor Ruroede functioned and prospered, for he was

told me that German officers had been using American passports to enter the allied lines, and learn the number and disposition of troops. They had to arrest Americans on sight, and find out if they were masqueraders. A little later one of our American ambassadors verified this by saying to me that American passports had been flagrantly abused." ("Golden Lads," by Arthur Gleason, p. 25.)

now assisted by one of our own secret-service men who had entered his employ, and was watched by others. The connection of the office with Von Papen and the German Embassy, and all the details of its operation and the sources of its funds were known to these detectives. On January 2, the diligent Ruroede provided American passports for four German reservists. He had obtained them from the United States secret-service man. He put his four German reservists on board the Norwegian steamer *Bergensfjord*, but as the big liner dropped down the bay she was followed by a United States revenue cutter. At quarantine federal officers boarded the steamer, arrested the reservists and brought them back to New York. The chain of evidence was complete. The complicity of the German Embassy was evident, but at the time action was only taken against Ruroede, and the German Embassy and the restless Von Papen were allowed to employ their talents elsewhere, and quite naturally the captain came to the conclusion that the Yankees were "idiotic." In this fashion not only were reservists sent abroad, but American

passports were procured which were used by German spies in Europe and in England.

We have seen that the third line of policy pursued by the German representatives in this country was directed toward using the United States as a basis for hostile operations. These were directed particularly against India, Ireland, and Canada. In this regard they were very active, though their success can hardly be called brilliant. The attempt to start a revolt in India was begun even before the declaration of war in 1914, and the German agents working with Hindoo revolutionists started operations in San Francisco, where the plotting was carried out under the direction of the German Consul Franz Bopp. With his assistants (they included Captain von Papen and Wolf von Igel) he was finally convicted in the federal court of San Francisco, in March, 1918, for "felonious conspiracy to set on foot a military enterprise to be carried on within the territory of the United States against India." The ramifications of this plot were almost innumerable, and the amount of fraud and deceit required in prosecuting it through its various stages

would have given pause to any other government. The telegram already quoted from Foreign Secretary Zimmermann to Count von Bernstorff shows that it was initiated at Berlin, and that its strands passed through our embassy. Agents were employed in Switzerland and in all sections of our country, though particularly in Chicago and San Francisco. Large sums were spent in propaganda among the Hindoos in the United States, and bribery was very frequently resorted to. Arms and ammunition were purchased and vessels like the *Annie Larsen* and the *Maverick* were chartered to carry them, and, of course, in order to have them cleared, false manifests were issued. When through the failure of some of the complicated arrangements part of these stores of arms and ammunition was landed at Hoquiam, Washington, Ambassador Bernstorff had the effrontery to request that they be turned over to the German consul at Seattle. While plans for supplying the projected Hindoo insurrectionists with arms and men were being carried out from San Francisco, a group of conspirators in Chicago under German leadership

and financed by German money from the German Embassy was planning a simultaneous invasion of India from Siam. Various substations in the plot were established at Hawaii, Manila, and Bangkok. The extent of the plot may be gathered from the fact that in various parts of the country, and especially in San Francisco, well over a hundred German agents with their Hindoo fellow conspirators were indicted, and most of them convicted.

If the Indian plot for all the sums* and ingenuity expended upon it proved a fiasco, much the same was true of the attempt to establish co-operation in America with the Irish Revolutionists. The failure was not due, however, to any unwillingness on the part of the imperial German ambassador to give unstinted aid in these underhand and felonious projects, which included the shipment of arms and supplies from America, and the telegrams from the "Military Information Bureau" in New York to Von Bernstorff sent in April, 1916, before Sir Roger Casement's blundering expedition,

* Chakraberty on the witness-stand admitted having received from Wolf von Igel alone $60,000.

leave no question as to the embassy's complicity in the matter.

The aid given by Canada to Great Britain in the struggle against Germany early became a thorn in the side of Germany's representatives in this country, and they decided to take measures against the Dominion, using the United States as their base of operations. Their plans contemplated not only the crippling of Canadian commerce and industry by blowing up bridges, tunnels, canals, and manufacturing establishments, but even the carrying of the war into Canada.

In February, 1915, Werner Horn, a German lieutenant, was ordered by Captain von Papen to blow up the Grand Trunk Railway bridge where it crosses from Vanceboro, Maine, into Canada. Von Papen supplied him with $700, and Horn was arrested after he had caused the explosion, was found guilty, and sentenced. Horn's adventure, however, was merely to have been a minor episode in a plot so extensive that it included the blowing up of the tunnels and bridges on the Canadian Pacific Railroad, the locks at Sault Ste. Marie, the tunnels from Port Huron to Sarnia under the St. Clair River,

the Welland Canal and important railroad junctions. Conspirators were sent out to do this by German consuls in various parts of the country, notably San Francisco and Chicago, and directly from New York by Von Papen. Enumeration of the various attempts made and of the tools hired by German agents or German-American sympathizers at the instigation of German officials would be monotonous. A single instance must suffice.

Captain von Papen picked as one of his collaborators a German citizen, Von der Goltz. It was decided that he should blow up the Welland Canal, the grain-elevators at Fort William, and if possible the Sault Ste. Marie locks and railroad bridges. At the German Club in New York Von Papen supplied him with the necessary fuses, wires, and generators, and made arrangements through which he should be supplied with dynamite by Captain Hans Tauscher. He was further provided with funds by Von Papen, some of them in the form of a check on the Riggs National Bank at Washington (where the German Embassy had its deposits), and started for Buffalo with suitcases containing 100 pounds of dynamite. In Buffalo his

difficulties began when an American confederate of Von Papen's failed to deliver the latter's telegraphic instructions. After Von der Goltz had compromised himself, Von Papen, under an assumed name (Steffens), telegraphed his Buffalo agent: "Please instruct Taylor (Von der Goltz) cannot do anything more for him." He did, however, promise to arrange with Ambassador Bernstorff for Von der Goltz's departure, and the arrangement was carried out, as the following receipt will show:

"NEW YORK, October 1, 1914.

"I acknowledge the receipt of $150.00 with the obligation of using the amount for a voyage to Germany.

"(Berlin General Staff.)

"H. VON DER GOLTZ."

The stubs of Von Papen's check-book show that Von der Goltz had received from the German Embassy or its military attaché about $1,800.

Unlike Von der Goltz, many of the conspirators, like those sent out from the San Francisco or Chicago consulates or by Albert Kaltschmidt in Detroit, succeeded in entering Canada and in some cases in causing more or less important explosions. It can be readily imagined that

the moral character of some of the agents employed was not very high, and yet some of them when it came to the sticking-point shrank from the wanton destruction of life involved in the tasks set them, as, for instance, when Kaltschmidt hired Respa to blow up the Windsor Armory, which was filled with soldiers. Respa planted thirty sticks of dynamite as he had been instructed to do, but before leaving, realizing that if his bomb exploded it would blow up the armory and "kill every man in it," he deliberately fixed the bomb so that it would not explode. Some of Kaltschmidt's other attempts, were, however, more successful. Kaltschmidt was from the first liberally supplied with German funds by Von Papen's secretary, Wolf von Igel; but the complicity of the German Embassy in the plot is proved beyond question by the following note from Albert, the commercial attaché of the German Embassy:

"H. F. ALBERT, 45 BROADWAY,
"NEW YORK, Oct. 4, 1915.

"*Chase National Bank, 57 Broadway, New York City:*

"*Gentlemen:*—Please deposit with Knauth, Nachod and Kuhne, New York, $25,000 (twenty-five thousand dollars) for account of Mr. Kalt-

schmidt, Detroit, and charge a like amount to my joint account with J. Bernstorff.

"Yours very truly,

"HEINRICH F. ALBERT."

At the same time that these attempts to cripple Canada were being made, Von Papen and Boy-Ed had devised a plan which they discussed with German reservists, and according to which they were to seize on the west coast of Canada, a spot where they could land German troops with the aid of German raiders. The reservists in the United States were to be sent to other neutral territory (probably Mexico), where they would be embarked. It was believed that this would, in the testimony of one of the confederates,

"(1) Prevent the Canadian contingents then under training from sailing for Europe.

"(2) Prevent Canada from supplying England with necessaries on account of their being needed in the country itself.

"(3) Bring matters in the United States to a decision, the Government being forced either to supply both parties with arms and ammunition, or to prohibit the export of these articles altogether."

This ambitious project, which had been elaborated in the early months of the war, finally met with objection on the part of Von Bernstorff, who either feared that Canada had become too strong for them, or that the plan would involve them too openly with our government.

But it was not only against Great Britain and her allies that the German representatives in this country plotted and acted. Having failed in their attempts to send aid directly to Germany or to cause any serious trouble in the British colonies, they next turned their attention to rendering the United States impotent by interfering with our manufactures and destroying our commerce. That these plans were made with the full knowledge, and possibly at the suggestion of Germany's ambassador, is plain from the following communication:

"IMPERIAL GERMAN EMBASSY,
"WASHINGTON, Nov. 4, 1916.

"I hereby permit myself to recommend to you most warmly Dr. Karl O. Bertling, Direktor of the Amerika-Institute in Berlin. Dr. Bertling will take the liberty to lay before you some matters pertaining to the activity of the

Central Bureau for German and Austro-Hungarian workmen. This work as well as the collection of funds for its further extension are worthy of all sympathy.

"Dr. Bertling is authorized to receive contributions in any amount. Checks are to be made payable to Hans Liebau, Treasurer.

"Yours with special respect,

"(Signed) J. VON BERNSTORFF."

The purpose of this bureau is suggested in the following extract from Liebau's monthly report made to the German Embassy for September, 1916:

"Many disturbances and suspensions which war material factories have had to suffer, and which it was not always possible to remove quickly, but which on the contrary often lead to long strikes, may be attributed to the energetic propaganda of the employment bureau."

The attempt to paralyze industry by the creation of strikes was, as we have seen, the reason for Ambassador Dumba's dismissal. At the time when Dumba received his passports and suspicion was directed toward Von Bernstorff, the latter took the position that "this slander required no answer," and according

to Dumba "had the happy inspiration to refuse any explanation." But so determined was the German Government to tie up industry in this country that, not content with the diligence of Von Bernstorff, it sent to America to direct this enterprise the Kaiser's special friend and representative, Franz von Rintelen, of whose activities we have already learned. It was he who had started *Labor's National Peace Council*, one of whose main purposes was to provoke strikes in munition-factories, and he employed numerous agitators to do this with promises of from $5,000 to $10,000 reward in cases where they promoted "successful strikes."

How eager Von Rintelen was to carry out his designs is evident from his proposal to pay the members of the International Longshoremen's Union $10 a week while idle, and at the time of making the proposal he sent word that he had the $1,035,000 necessary for the purpose. While *Labor's National Peace Council* was being organized, Von Rintelen's accounts with the Transatlantic Trust Company show that he paid out from April to August $468,000. It is pleasant to remember that

here Greek met Greek, and that for all his diligence and munificence Von Rintelen received little in return.

More successful were the attempts made to start fires and explosions in American munition-factories. It would be impossible to give a list of all these, but some indication of their frequency and seriousness may be gleaned from the fact that at the time when the German agents were most active in this regard, within twenty-four hours between November 10 and 11, 1915, incendiary fires and explosions took place in the Bethlehem Steel Works, the Midvale Steel and Ordnance Company, the Baldwin Locomotive Works at Eddystone, and the John A. Roebling's Sons Company at Trenton, N. J. But besides the attempt to destroy our munition-factories, determined and systematic attempts, in many cases unfortunately successful, were made to blow up ships carrying munitions from this country to Europe. To this end several bomb-manufacturing plants were established under the direction of Captain von Papen and Wolf von Igel. When some of the conspirators were brought

to trial, one of the witnesses proved to be a detective who belonged to the New York "Bomb Squad." Under the pretense that he was a German secret-service man employed by Wolf von Igel (Von Papen's secretary), he had succeeded in making an appointment with Captain von Kleist, superintendent of one of these factories, and he gave the following account of the interview:

"We sat down and we spoke for about three hours. I asked him the different things that he did, and said if he wanted an interview with Mr. von Igel, my boss, he would have to tell everything. So he told me that Von Papen gave Dr. Scheele, the partner of Von Kleist in this factory, a check for $10,000 to start this bomb factory. . . . He told me that he, Mr. von Kleist, and Dr. Scheele and a man by the name of Becker on the *Friedrich der Grosse* were making the bombs, and that Captain Wolpert, Captain Bode, and Captain Steinberg, had charge of putting these bombs on the ships; they put these bombs in cases and shipped them as merchandise on these steamers, and they would go away on the trip and the bombs would go off after the ship was out four or five days, causing a fire and causing the cargo to go up in flames. . . . He also told me that they have made quite a number of these bombs;

that thirty of them were given to a party by the name of O'Leary, and that he took them down to New Orleans where he had charge of putting them on ships down there, this fellow O'Leary."

Between three and four hundred bombs were manufactured by this group and fires are known to have been started by them on thirty-three ships sailing from New York alone. There were, however, other factories in the East, and in addition the German consul in San Francisco showed in this regard the same diligence in deviltry that he had in others.

It is plain that the German Embassy and the German representatives in this country stopped at nothing in their attempt to advance their cause. We need not, therefore, be surprised in considering the last phase of their intrigue and plotting to find that, while they pretended to be at peace with us and protested friendship, they should all the time have been busily engaged in underhand plans to embroil the United States with its neighbors. In this way they thought they could create a situation which would demand our undivided attention, and make it impossible for us either to export

munitions or to take any measures against Germany for her violation of our rights. The scheme to which the German officials continually reverted was that of embroiling us with Mexico and Japan. In addition to his work in fomenting strikes Von Rintelen had evidently been given a special commission to start war if possible between ourselves and our southern neighbors. At his trial one of the witnesses testified that Rintelen had explained his purposes as follows:

"That he came to the United States in order to embroil it with Mexico and Japan if necessary; that he was doing all he could and was going to do all he could to embroil this country with Mexico; that he believed that if the United States had a war with Mexico it would stop the shipment of ammunition to Europe; that he believed it would be only a matter of time until we were involved with Japan.

"Rintelen also said that General Huerta was going to return to Mexico and start a revolution there which would cause the United States to intervene and so make it impossible to ship munitions to Europe. Intervention, he said, was one of his trump cards."

Everything that could be done in furtherance of this plan in the way of encouraging and at-

tempting to supply munitions to the Mexican rebels was done, and within Mexico itself Von Rintelen was in connection with other German agents who were conducting a powerful anti-American propaganda. This whole phase of his activity was to culminate in the notorious Zimmermann note, which was, however, not to become known in this country, at least not to the public till after our entry into the war. It will be cited later and proves a fitting climax to the three years of intrigue carried on by diplomats who spent what time they could spare from their underhand plotting, in protesting their friendship.

The brief summary given above is sufficient to show that Von Bernstorff's activities were such that he deserved to be dismissed long before he was. Our government seems to have been unwilling to act on facts established on unimpeachable evidence. If any one still under the spell of old ideas finds the record incredible or the complicity of the German Embassy in Von Papen's felonious attempts doubtful, he need merely scan the following accounts of the funds deposited to Von Papen's credit di-

rectly by the German Embassy. Some of these deposits were made by Ambassador von Bernstorff in person:

1914		
Sept. 9	$1,116.20	Bernstorff.
" 24	1,100.00	"
Oct. 21	1,000.00	"
Nov. 4	583.10	German Embassy.
" 25	2,000.00	" "
Dec. 7	2,583.10	Bernstorff.
1915		
Jan. 9	3,000.00	German Embassy.
" 15	2,000.00	" "
Feb. 5	2,000.00	Bernstorff.
" 24	1,500.00	German Embassy.
" 25	3,600.00	" "
" 26	1,749.30	" "
May 26	1,166.20	" "
June 1	583.10	" "
July 20	1,154.30	" "
Sept. 7	2,500.00	" "
Oct. 14	2,500.00	" "

In December, 1915, our government finally took action not against Von Bernstorff but against Von Bernstorff's tools, and Von Papen and Boy-Ed were recalled. On that occasion the German Government at Berlin sent to the

United States for publication in the press, the following official statement:

"The German Government has naturally never knowingly accepted the support of any person, group of persons, society or organization seeking to promote the cause of Germany in the United States by illegal acts, by counsel of violence, by contravention of law, or by any means whatever that could offend the American people in the pride of their own authority."

It is difficult to assess how far the facts recounted influenced our government or people, for it is impossible to say how much was definitely known at Washington at any given time. That these demonstrations of German bad faith became a factor in determining our attitude will be plain from President Wilson's statement which will be quoted in the concluding chapter.

CHAPTER IX

PEACE PROPOSALS

AS the war progressed during the period of the negotiations on the submarine question two things had become clearer with every month. In the first place, the issues of the war, which had at first been deliberately obscured by German diplomacy, were being gradually disclosed by her unmistakable conduct. In the second place, as our own experience proved, and as the President with his usual clear-sightedness had discerned, neutrality in so serious a conflict, involving such momentous interests, must become increasingly difficult, if not impossible. For very different reasons, then, by a curious coincidence, von Bethmann-Hollweg and President Wilson put forth at the same time proposals for peace. Perhaps nothing has been so difficult to understand as this seemingly similar action, for to the world at large and, indeed, to many of our people the very divergent motives which governed

the Chancellor and our President were not clearly set apart. Let us, therefore, begin by saying that the President's action had been planned long before he knew of the German intention, and if we would understand the two proposals we must consider them separately.

Let us examine therefore in some detail the German situation. With the publication of the statements by Doctor Mühlon and Prince Lichnowsky, the belief that Germany was responsible for the war had naturally become a conviction. It is plain also that the German Government began it as a war of aggression, and though many of its subjects were and are still deluded, the progress of the war made its purposes clear, even though with characteristic duplicity it attempted to maintain to the end the fiction that it was fighting in self-defense.

A large party, indeed, the most influential party in Germany, which included the militarists and Pan-Germanists, had, as we have seen, intended that the new war prophesied by Bernhardi, and looked forward to as "The Day," should at last give Germany a considerable start toward the realization of *Gross Deutsch-*

land (greater Germany). The programme, as we saw in Chapter I, included annexation east and west. The adjoining peoples especially toward the east in Russia, the Balkans, and Asia Minor, were to be forced into the Empire, and the Hohenzollerns, who had made themselves masters of all Germany, were in turn to make themselves masters of Europe and the world. It is in the following language that Naumann, a deputy of the Reichstag and one of the best-known political publicists of Germany expresses it:

"And over all these; over the Germans, French, Danes, and Poles in the German Empire; over the Magyars, Germans, Roumanians, Slovaks, Croats, and Serbs in Hungary; over the Germans, Czechs, Slovaks, Poles, and southern Slavs in Austria, let us imagine once again the controlling concept of Mid-Europe."

That Germany planned to carry out this programme in the World War became clearer when six of the great industrial and agricultural associations of Germany, on May 20, 1915, presented their petition to the Chancellor.

They urged that Belgium should be subject

to Germany in "military and tariff matters, as well as in currency, banking, and post." Northern France as far as the river Somme should also be annexed for "our future position at sea," and the industrial establishments in the annexed territories should be transferred to German hands. From Russia part of the Baltic Provinces and the territories to the south should be taken. Germany's need of new agricultural territory, of new mining and industrial districts, especially of the coal and iron of Belgium and northern France, was emphasized.* This was to be followed just a month later by a petition signed by 1,341 of the most important members of the university, church, official, legal, literary, and artistic circles.

It advocated the annexation of the whole eastern part of France, from Belfort to the coast, and the transfer of the business undertakings and estates to German ownership. Belgium was to be held and the inhabitants allowed no political influence in the empire. The occupied part of Russia was to be retained and the land turned over to Germany. Egypt was

*See *War Cyclopædia* article, "No Annexations, No Indemnities."

to be taken from England. As to indemnities, "we ought not to hesitate to impose upon France as much as possible."*

Subsequent statements to the same purport could be added, but we can be in no doubt where Germany stood after Ambassador Gerard's report of his interview with Von Bethmann-Hollweg, while the German peace terms were still before the world. From the time when the question of peace was first broached Mr. Gerard asked the Chancellor and other officials what Germany's peace terms were. He could never succeed in drawing from them any definite terms, and on several occasions when he asked the Chancellor if Germany was willing to withdraw from Belgium, the Chancellor replied: "Yes, but with guarantees." He seemed unwilling to explain, but when pressed and asked directly what these guarantees were he replied:

" 'We must possibly have the forts of Liége and Namur; we must have other forts and garrisons throughout Belgium. We must have possession of the railroad lines. We must have possession of the ports and other means of com-

War Cyclopædia, ibid.

munication. The Belgians will not be allowed to maintain an army, but we must be allowed to retain a large army in Belgium. We must have the commercial control of Belgium.'"

Mr. Gerard explained that this left little for the Belgians except King Albert's right to an honor guard and residence in Brussels. The Chancellor continued, "We cannot allow Belgium to be an outpost (*Vorwerk*) of England," and Mr. Gerard replied: " 'I do not suppose the English, on the other hand, wish it to become an outpost of Germany, especially as von Tirpitz has said that the coast of Flanders should be retained in order to make war on England and America!' I continued, 'How about Northern France?' He said, 'We are willing to leave Northern France, but there must be a rectification of the frontier.' I said, 'How about the Eastern frontier?' He said, 'We must have a very substantial rectification of our frontier.' I said, 'How about Roumania?' He said, 'We shall leave Bulgaria to deal with Roumania.' I said, 'How about Serbia?' He said, 'A very small Serbia may be allowed to exist, but that is a question for Austria. Aus-

tria must be left to do what she wishes to Italy, and we must have indemnities from all countries and all our ships and colonies back.'

"Of course, 'rectification of the frontier' is a polite term for annexation."*

We have considered Germany's war aims. Let us now consider for a moment the military situation when she made her proffers in December, 1916. She had been amazingly successful up to this point on practically all fronts. She occupied practically all of Belgium, Serbia, Montenegro, a large part of Roumania, Poland, and important stretches of Russia, and the coal and iron deposits of northern France. Russia at this time was still in the war and, if reorganized and provided with munitions, the lack of which had caused her disastrous retreat, she would become again a formidable enemy. The threat of the Anglo-French successes on the Somme (1916) had become so serious that the military authorities were already considering the retreat to the Hindenburg line in France,

* "My Four Years in Germany," by James W. Gerard, pp. 365–366.

and Von Bissing had expressed the fear that it might become necessary to evacuate Belgium. The situation, therefore, though it appeared outwardly very favorable, was in reality fraught with grave possibilities. The arch-enemy, England, had not yet been subdued. As the situation presented itself to the Germans it was probably in terms like this: We must either now make peace on the basis of our present very large holdings of territory, and prepare to settle the score with England later, or else start a war to the death on England and destroy her commerce and fleet.

If peace could be made on the basis of extent of occupied territory (and Germany suggested no other basis), she could not help coming out with enormously extended frontiers. She held all the trumps, and in the diplomatic game she must inevitably win. If, however, the Allies proved unwilling to make peace on such terms, Germany had long been preparing a weapon which the infallible military authorities assured her would starve England out and bring her to her knees, probably within three months, within six months at the latest. That weapon

was the submarine ruthlessly employed. The one drawback was the possibility of driving sorely tried neutrals into the arms of her enemies.

From the American attitude on the *Sussex* affair it was a plain inference that danger threatened from that quarter. The plan to use the submarine ruthlessly had, however, long since been decided upon. Indeed, immediately after the receipt in Berlin of our last *Sussex* note, Ambassador Gerard was so convinced that the rulers of Germany would at some future date take up ruthless submarine warfare, that he warned the State Department that such warfare would possibly come in the autumn or at any rate about February or March, 1917.* This may explain why President Wilson made the speeches which so startled America about the great dangers that threatened and the possibilities of the conflagration reaching us from one day to the next. When later, in September, Mr. Gerard returned to the United States, Von Jagow insistently urged him to make every effort to induce the President to take steps

* Gerard, "My Four Years in Germany," p. 345.

toward bringing about peace.* Germany had been industriously building submarines and was ready, so she thought, to give England the death-stroke.

Any peace that would be concluded would have to be a "German peace," and if peace were refused the blame would be put upon the Allies. The United States and other neutrals could, therefore, offer no objection to Germany's using the submarine, and riding roughshod over neutral rights, as she had already attempted to do at the time of the declaration of the war zone in February of 1915.

At the meeting of the Reichstag, therefore, on December 12, 1916, in a speech in which he explained the very favorable situation of the German armies, and denied there was any starvation or any disturbances in Germany, Von Bethmann-Hollweg announced that his Majesty had decided to stretch out his hand for peace at the price of Germany's "free future."

This phrase, whose meaning, like a gas, was capable of indefinite expansion, was one of the

* Gerard, "My Four Years in Germany," p. 346.

type that is to be found in every German proposal. The communication further insisted that the Central Powers had been obliged "to take up arms to defend justice and the liberty of national evolution." How they had defined justice we had learned from their actions in Belgium and on the high seas, and what they meant by national evolution is plain from the exposition by Herr Naumann quoted above. The note made no concrete suggestions. Its two material assertions were that the Entente bore the responsibility for beginning the war and that the Central Powers were now victorious.

The Allies naturally, in the phrase of Lloyd George, refused to put their heads into a noose of which Germany held the free end, and immediately and from practically all of the Allied countries came statements to the effect that they could not deal with her on this basis.*

The joint Entente reply of December 30, 1916, was to the effect that a mere suggestion,

* Premier Lloyd George's speech in the House of Commons, December 19, 1916. Premier Briand's speech in the French Chamber of Deputies, December 13. Resolution of the Russian Duma, December 15. Baron Sonnino's speech in the Italian Chamber of Deputies, December 18.

without statement of terms, that negotiations should be opened, is not an offer of peace, and that this sham proposal, lacking substance and precision, appeared to be less an offer of peace than a war manœuvre, which in fact it was. Considering the character of Germany's two statements and her previous attitude toward treaties it hardly seemed that war could be ended by accepting her word.

Let us turn from this to a consideration of the course of our own President. His proposal had undoubtedly begun to take shape in his own mind even before the *Sussex* affair had been settled. In an address at Washington before the League to Enforce Peace, on May 27, 1916, he had said:

"We are participants whether we would or not, in the life of the world. The interests of all nations are our own also . . . what affects mankind is inevitably our affair as well the affair of the nations of Europe and of Asia."

Against her will America had become convinced that she could no longer live in the charmed isolation which had been possible in the days of Washington and Monroe. The

submarine, naval cruiser and transport, the cable and wireless had brought us, whether we would or not, to the shores of Europe. "America up to the present time has been, as if by deliberate choice, confined and provincial, and it will be impossible for her to remain confined and provincial. Henceforth she belongs to the world and must act as part of the world."* Furthermore, as the President was to announce at Shadow Lawn on October 16:

"And now, by circumstances which she did not choose, over which she had no control, she [America] has been thrust out into the great game of mankind, on the stage of the world itself, and here she must know what she is about, and no nation in the world must doubt that all her forces are gathered and organized in the interest of just, righteous, and humane government."

His whole thought, or as much of it as he dared disclose without violating state secrets at the time, was even more clearly put in his address at Cincinnati on October 26:

"I believe that the business of neutrality is over, not because I want it to be over, but

* President Wilson, October 5, 1916.

I mean this, that war now has such a scale that the position of neutrals sooner or later becomes intolerable."

The burden of unsettled cases against the Allies and the much more serious questions against Germany was becoming so great that there was no telling when we might be forced to break under the strain. The belligerents naturally tended to increase their pretensions. We were the last great independent neutral, yet how long we could remain so was doubtful. If peace was to come before we were forced to enter the war, we must help to make it come.* The decision about the submarine *Deutschland* had been made against the protest of the Allies. Many of our own people were protesting against the conduct of the *U*-51 in sinking vessels carrying returning Americans just off our coast. Our own people were aroused against the deportation of the innocent civilian population in Belgium and northern France. Thousands of American citizens were protesting to Washington against the

* How serious this strain was becoming is evident from Secretary Lansing's statement given to the press on December 18, 1916, and immediately withdrawn.

outrage to humanity which we could not sit by and regard with unconcern under penalty of stultifying ourselves. This had impressed Washington so seriously that it had become the subject of correspondence with our ministers abroad.*

The reports of Germany's plans which Ambassador Gerard brought to Washington made it a case of now or never. For this reason and without knowing anything about the German peace manœuvre, and doubtless without having been impressed by Von Jagow's urging, President Wilson prepared an identic note to all the belligerents, which makes no pretense of being purely disinterested.

"In the measures to be taken to secure the future peace of the world the people and Government of the United States are as vitally and as directly interested as the Governments now at war. Their interest, moreover, in the means to be adopted to relieve the smaller and weaker peoples of the world of the peril of wrong and violence is as quick and ardent as that of any other people or Government. They stand

* Department of State, Diplomatic Correspondence with Belligerent Governments Relating to Neutral Rights and Duties, European War, No. 4, pp. 357–373.

ready, and even eager, to co-operate in the accomplishment of these ends, when the war is over, with every influence and resource at their command. But the war must first be concluded. The terms upon which it is to be concluded they are not at liberty to suggest; but the President does feel that it is his right and his duty to point out their intimate interest in its conclusion, lest it should presently be too late to accomplish the greater things which lie beyond its conclusion, lest the situation of neutral nations, now exceedingly hard to endure, be rendered altogether intolerable, and lest, more than all, an injury be done civilization itself which can never be atoned for or repaired." *

He asked therefore that the leaders of the several belligerents make statements of the "precise objects which would, if attained, satisfy them and their people that the war had been fought out." It was evident that he hoped to bring about some "concert of free peoples," before "resentments were kindled that could never cool and despairs engendered from which there could be no recovery."

The spirit of this communication was worlds removed from that of Germany, and nothing

* President Wilson's Peace Note, December 18, 1916.

proved the insincerity of the German claim so completely as her answer to this frank and direct request. This idea of a peace based on principles plainly embarrassed her. She replied lamely and evasively that it was the view of the Imperial Government "that the great work for the prevention of future wars can first be taken up only after the ending of the present conflict of exhaustion." The reply proved, as all German history might have led us to foresee, that Germany wanted no concert of free peoples and no league to enforce peace. She did not wish to be forced to any statement of principle, so contented herself with assurances of friendship and the suggestion that "a direct exchange of views appears to the Imperial Government as the most suitable way of arriving at the desired result." In other words she wanted a peace not based on any recognition of the rights of small nations or on any other recognized principle that conflicted with her notion of her own "national evolution" and "free future." *

* German Reply to President Wilson's Peace Note, December 26, 1916. It is interesting to note that the German Government made no definite proposal and did not suggest even a return to the "status quo ante bellum" either in her own bid for peace or in her reply to President Wilson.

The reply of the Allies was far more definite. They were heartily in favor of the "creation of a league of nations to insure peace and justice throughout the world," and recognized "all the advantages for the cause of humanity and civilization which the institution of international agreements destined to avoid violent conflict between nations would prevent."* They insisted, however, with right that the Central Empires were responsible for the war, and protested against the statement made in the President's request that all of the belligerents seemed to be fighting for the same thing. For to the last the President had remained charitable and refrained from judging the motives of the Central Powers. It was natural, however, that the Allies should have refused to allow themselves to be classed on the same footing with the Central Powers, and Belgium quite cor-

Von Bethmann-Hollweg's statement to Ambassador Gerard shows that she counted on much more than this. In President Wilson's Note to the Russian People of June 9, 1917, he makes plain that the status quo ante could not be accepted as a satisfactory basis for future peace. "It was the status quo ante out of which this iniquitous war issued forth, the power of the Imperial German Government within the empire and its wide-spread domination and influence outside that empire. That status must be altered in such fashion as to prevent any such hideous thing from ever happening again."

* Entente Reply to President Wilson's Peace Note, January 10, 1917.

rectly and in a spirit of wounded aggrievance sent a separate note in which she claimed the proud right to say that she had taken up arms to defend her existence, and that it was unfair to think that Germany was fighting for the same principle or the same ends.* All of the Allies, however, agreed that they wished to attain a peace which would assure them "reparation, restitution, and guarantees," to which they held themselves entitled by the aggressions committed against them. With regard to the conditions of peace for the different members of the Entente they specified how in general these principles must be applied, though they could not give all of the details until the beginning of negotiations. They closed with their assurance that they wished a peace based upon principles of liberty and justice, and the inviolable fidelity to international obligations. The results were exactly what might have been expected. Germany could hardly have set forth a principle for which she was fighting, as there was none which she had not violated in her fight. She wanted an-

* Belgian Note Supplementary to Entente Reply.

nexations and prestige. Though the President was probably disappointed since he may have hoped the military situation of Germany was serious enough to abate her pretensions, yet he could hardly have expected much more. He has the satisfaction, however, of having given Germany every opportunity and made her every concession consistent with our honor and independence. The answer of Germany indicated that further efforts along this line would be useless, but the President made one more desperate and unavailing effort by stating before Congress on January 22, 1917, the bases and principles of the peace which America could accept, ratify, and assist in maintaining. It was to be the peace of justice. The rights of all peoples to determine their government in the future were to be recognized as well as the rights of all to the free highways of the sea (for which Germany claimed to be contending), and this peace was to be achieved without the crushing of any of the belligerents. It was to be the "peace without victory." But all his eloquence and good-will were wasted on the leaders of Germany. They were not

willing to consider proposals of principles and had already made their choice. Either the Allies must accept a German peace or America would have to accept the last reckless phase of ruthlessness.

CHAPTER X

THE FINAL CHALLENGE

WHILE the American people were still earnestly discussing President Wilson's proposals for a world peace made in his address before the Senate on January 22, the German ambassador handed to the Secretary of State along with a formal note a memorandum which contained the following statement:

"The Imperial Government, therefore, does not doubt that the Government of the United States will understand the situation thus forced upon Germany by the Entente Allies' brutal methods of war and by their determination to destroy the Central Powers, and that the Government of the United States will further realize that the now openly disclosed intentions of the Entente Allies give back to Germany the freedom of action which she reserved in her note addressed to the Government of the United States on May 4, 1916.*

"Under these circumstances Germany will meet the illegal measures of her enemies by

* Any such interpretation of the German note had been specifically precluded by the American note of May 8, 1916. See Chapter VIII.

forcibly preventing after February 1, 1917, in a zone around Great Britain, France, Italy, and in the eastern Mediterranean all navigation, that of neutrals included, from and to France, etc. All ships met within the zone will be sunk." *

The precipitancy of Germany's action showed that this move had been prepared in advance, that she had already decided upon her second alternative, and to any negotiated peace of principle she preferred a ruthless war. The hollowness of her peace proposals had already become painfully evident. She had made the manœuvre for the reasons discussed in the last chapter and with the hope of dividing the belligerent peoples and of making neutrals believe that a "new situation" had been created.

Apart from the great zones declared in the Mediterranean by her obedient ally, Austria-Hungary, prohibited zones extended in a broad belt from Spain to the Faroe Islands. If she could do this there was no reason why she should not extend it to our own three-mile limit, and, indeed, to our very shores. But

* Department of State, Diplomatic Correspondence with Belligerent Governments, etc., European War, No. 4, pp. 405–407.

more serious and amazing than the decree of this zone itself was the curt statement that all ships met within the zone would be sunk.

We had announced in our note to Germany of April 18, 1916,* that, unless the German Government immediately declared and effected an abandonment of its present methods of submarine warfare, the "Government of the United States could have no choice but to sever diplomatic relations with the German Empire altogether." There was, therefore, no possibility of argument or discussion. Germany declared not only that she expected to revert to the methods she had employed before the sinking of the *Sussex*, but that she planned to enter upon a warfare even more ruthless which would accept no restraint of law whatever. She was threatening not only to violate all rules of international law, but also the solemn promise made to the United States.

It was not surprising, therefore, that the President for a time should have been nonplussed. He refused to believe that Germany could mean what she seemed to say and spoke like an honest man, who, stunned by a blow,

* *Cf.* Chapter VIII.

still feels that his hurt may be due not to wilful attack but to some incomprehensible accident. Though his course of action was clearly indicated, he still desired to be charitable in his interpretation. In his address to Congress on February 3, he was to take Congress and the people very fully into his confidence:

"Notwithstanding this unexpected action of the German Government, this sudden and deeply deplorable renunciation of its assurances, given this Government at one of the most critical moments of tension in the relations of the two governments, I refuse to believe that it is the intention of the German authorities to do in fact what they have warned us they will feel at liberty to do. I cannot bring myself to believe that they will indeed pay no regard to the ancient friendship* between their people and

* This traditional friendship had been insisted upon in many of the German communications with our Government. The following are expressions of German opinion on the United States at the time of the war with Spain:

The *Cologne Zeitung* wrote, on April 22, 1898: "Our sympathy belongs to Spain, because she represents international law."

The *Kreutzzeitung* of April 28: "The lowest motives brought about this war."

Of April 27: "Open greed for plunder occasioned this war."

The *Vossische Zeitung* of April 8: "The American people have not the right to assume at once the rôle of judge and dictator."

Of April 10: "The whole American republic was founded upon the violation of the rights of other peoples."

The *Taegliche Rundschau:* "American politicians are pocketbook patriots, who allow themselves to be bought and sold by the industrial millionaires. Their God is Mammon, and they betray their own country."

our own or to the solemn obligations which have been exchanged between them, and destroy American ships and take the lives of American citizens in the wilful prosecution of the ruthless naval programme they have announced their intention to adopt.

"Only actual overt acts on their part can make me believe it even now."

There was no possible alternative, and passports were, therefore, issued to Ambassador von Bernstorff by Secretary of State Lansing on this eventful date.

Let us try to understand why Germany took upon herself the guilt for this additional breach of faith. But let us not make the mistake of attributing to Germany the ordinary principles of political morality. The explanation was simple, and was bluntly given to the Reichstag by the German Chancellor in an address of January 31. He had been Chancellor at the time of the *Sussex* negotiations, and the promise made by Germany had been freely given after due deliberation and with the alternative of severing diplomatic relations frankly offered. "The question of the U-boat war, as the gentlemen of the Reichstag will remember, has oc-

cupied us three times in this committee, in March, May, and September, last year [1916]. On each occasion in an exhaustive statement I expounded for and against in this question." (The meeting in May was evidently the one held at the time when, after weighing all sides of the question, he and his government had made the promise to America.) "I emphasized on each occasion," continued Von Bethmann-Hollweg, "that . . . I was speaking pro tempore, and not as a supporter in principle or an opponent in principle of the unrestricted employment of the U-boats, but in consideration of the military, political, and economic situation as a whole.

"I always proceeded from the standpoint as to whether an unrestricted U-boat war would bring us nearer to a victorious peace or not. Every means, I said in March, that is calculated to shorten the war is the humanest policy to follow. When the most ruthless methods are considered as the best calculated to lead us to a victory and to a swift victory, I said at that time, then they must be employed."

He had confessed his guilt in the case of Bel-

gium at the beginning of the war. Let us see how he will do it now. He proceeded:

"This moment has now arrived. Last Autumn the time was not yet ripe, but to-day the moment has come when, with the greatest prospect of success, we can undertake this enterprise. We must, therefore, not wait any longer. Where has there been a change?

"In the first place, the most important fact of all is that the number of our submarines has very considerably increased as compared with last spring, and thereby a firm basis has been created for success. The second codecisive reason is the bad wheat harvest of the world."

We would expect that he would now go on to mention the third and all-important consideration, a solemn promise given to another great state. We are mistaken. The promise made is not even mentioned. It had been given only to deceive America and to give Germany time to build more submarines which she had evidently been doing at the very time when the promise was made. Unabashed, he continued:

"If we may now venture to estimate the positive advantages of an unrestricted U-boat

war at a very much higher value than last spring, the dangers which arise for us from the U-boat war have correspondingly decreased since that time."

He had consulted not the German people, he had consulted not his conscience, he had consulted Hindenburg, and explained that, "A few days ago Marshal von Hindenburg described to me the situation as follows: 'Our front stands firm on all sides. We have everywhere the requisite reserves. The spirit of the troops is good and confident. The military situation, as a whole, permits us to accept all consequences which an unrestricted U-boat war may bring about, and as this U-boat war in all circumstances is the means to injure our enemies most grievously, it must be begun.'"

This was all, but it threw a long stream of light over the whole course of the war to which we had deliberately and officially closed our eyes. It explained to us what had happened to the treaty guaranteeing Belgium, it explained to us at last, and made only too clear, the reasons for German atrocities on land and sea. It gave us a stake in this war. It was no longer for us

merely a question of humanity or of principle. It was a question of immediate interest, of self-defense against this hopelessly aggressive and militaristic power whose policy was again threatening not only the foundations of international law but ourselves.

The principle or rather the excuse of "military necessity" had become now merely military expediency. As Secretary of State Lansing was to put it:

"It is this disclosure of the character of the Imperial German Government which is the underlying cause of our entry into the war. We had doubted, or at least many Americans had doubted, the evil purposes of the rulers of Germany. Doubt remained no longer.

"In the light of events we could read the past, and see that for a quarter of a century the absorbing ambition of the military oligarchy which was the master of the German Empire was for world dominion. Every agency in the fields of commerce, industry, science, and diplomacy had been directed by the German Government to this supreme end. Philosophers and preachers taught that the destiny of Germany was to rule the world, thus preparing the minds of the German people for the time when the mighty engine which the German Government had constructed should crush all

opposition and the German Emperor should rule supreme." *

We were not dealing with a people, we were dealing with a group of irresponsible plotters who had long been accepted as rulers by a people obsessed by the idea of their own superiority, which raised them not only above other states, but above the right and those laws on which all states are based. If then we came to speak of a war between democracy and autocracy, what we meant will be clear if we compare Germany's course in this affair with President Wilson's, or consider for a moment a sentence in the First Inaugural of the first President of the Republic. At that time Washington had announced:

". . . The foundation of our national policy will be laid in the pure and immutable principles of private morality, and the pre-eminence of free government be exemplified by all the attributes which can win the affection of its citizens and command the respect of the world. I dwell on this prospect with every satisfaction which an ardent love for my country can in-

* *Cf.* "A War of Self-Defense," by Robert Lansing. Louis F. Post, Committee on Public Information, p. 4.

spire, since there is no truth more thoroughly established than that there exists in the economy and course of nature an indissoluble union between virtue and happiness; between duty and advantage; between the genuine maxims of an honest and magnanimous policy and the solid rewards of public prosperity and felicity; since we ought to be no less persuaded that the propitious smiles of Heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right which Heaven itself has ordained; and since the preservation of the sacred fire of liberty and the destiny of the republican model of government are justly considered, perhaps, as deeply, as finally, staked on the experiment intrusted to the hands of the American people."

Instead of any such principle, whenever a question of German policy was to be decided, the Chancellor, who was not responsible to any Reichstag or any people, consulted a Hindenburg or a Von Tirpitz or a Ludendorff, and in secret decided upon a war or the violation of a treaty. Upon their action there was no check, and argument was useless, since their promises were without value. Aggression was the very condition of the life of this militaristic state, and the natural attitude of all other na-

tions had, therefore, to be one of self-defense until the present Germany was overthrown.

The fundamental antagonisms which set ourselves and Prussia asunder were now clear as day.

It was plain also why Germany received coldly President Wilson's proposal for a Concert of Powers. It was also plain why at The Hague Conference she had stood in the way of general disarmament. The army was the life of this state, its one reason for being, and Professor Delbrück wrote in 1914:

"Any one who has any familiarity at all with our officers and generals knows that it would take another Sedan, inflicted on us instead of by us, before they would acquiesce in the control of the army by the German Parliament."

We now understood why she was the only one of the great Powers that had refused to sign with us an arbitration treaty. Weak nations she crushed without regard or mercy. In this way she had started the recent war on Serbia, and had achieved her first characteristic triumph in Belgium. Strong nations, of whose power she was more jealous and against whom

her animosity was therefore more particularly directed, she circumvented by ruse and attempted to destroy by sudden treacherous strokes. The difference between the spirit of the two nations was illustrated in the treatment accorded to the two departing ambassadors. The German consular officials and representatives were treated with courtesy, safe-conducts were procured for them, and on February 14 they departed for Europe. Ambassador Gerard, on the other hand, was held in Berlin against his will from Monday until Saturday, much of that time in his house, cut off from communication with the outside world, his telephone for a time having been disconnected and his mail withheld. He was for some days unable to communicate with other officers or his government, or to transmit instructions to consular officials. They attempted to dragoon him into signing a treaty, while thus kept in ignorance of events, and it was only after this was discovered to be impossible that he was allowed to proceed on his way to Switzerland.* Many Americans, from having heard it repeated so

*"My Four Years in Germany," p. 383.

frequently in our diplomatic correspondence, had come to believe that there was a particular friendship existing between the German people and ourselves. When Ambassador Gerard returned and was free to speak, he told a quite different story. Very early in the war the American flag was covered with crape and laid at the feet of the statue of Frederick the Great with a placard insulting our government, and he had had difficulty in having it removed.

During the winter of the submarine controversy before the sinking of the *Lusitania*, one of the most conservative newspapers, the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, printed an interview with Von Tirpitz thinly veiled as a high naval authority. In this interview the "high naval authority" advocated ruthless submarine war with England, promising to effect thereby the speedy surrender of that country. After the surrender, which was to include the whole British fleet, the German fleet with this accession of strength was to sail for America and exact from us indemnities sufficient to pay the whole cost of the war.

After his fall Von Tirpitz, in a letter to some

admirers who had sent him verses and a wreath, advocated holding the coast of Flanders as a necessity for the war against England and America.*

Zimmermann had made it plain to Colonel House on the latter's visit that Germany was ready to go to war with the United States. They were the more ready to do this as they scorned us for our impotence and insisted that "public sentiment of your country is such that you will not be able to raise an army large enough to make any impression." †

Germany's purposes toward us were then or were soon to become evident. With characteristic indirection before his departure, Von Bernstorff requested the Swiss Minister to say that the German Government was now as before willing to negotiate with the United States, "providing that the commercial blockade against England will not be broken thereby." Secretary Lansing answered to the effect "that the Government of the United States would gladly discuss with the German Government any questions it might propose for discussion

* Gerard, "My Four Years in Germany," p. 249. † *Ibid.*, p. 336.

were it to withdraw its proclamation of the 31st of January in which and without previous intimation of any kind it cancelled the assurances which it had given."*

Ambassador von Bernstorff further requested urgently that no measures be taken until he should have had an opportunity of laying the matter before his own government. The President was evidently willing to make this further concession, and took no decisive action until he addressed Congress on February 26, asking for a grant of power. He was still unwilling to make war and hoped that "it will not be necessary to put armed forces anywhere into action," though he held that we must defend our commerce and the lives of our people with great and steadfast purpose. Germany had evidently already put her threat into execution and had sunk on February 3 the American ship *Housatonic*, and on February 13 the *Lyman M. Law*. The President, therefore, wished authorization to supply our merchant ships "with defensive arms should that become neces-

* Department of State, Diplomatic Correspondence with Belligerent Governments Relating to Neutral Rights and Duties, European War, No. 4, pp. 414–415.

sary, and with the means of using them, and to employ any other instrumentalities or methods that may be necessary and adequate to protect our ships and their cargoes in their peaceful and legitimate pursuits of the seas." * Congress was overwhelmingly in favor of granting this request and more than five hundred out of 531 members of the two Houses of Congress were ready and eager to act. But a filibuster by a handful of "wilful men" led by Senator LaFollette prolonged debate until the expiration of the congressional session March 4, and made action impossible. On March 12, however, orders were finally issued to arm American ships against submarines.

There could no longer be any doubt about Germany's intentions. On March 2, she had continued the sinking of American vessels, and there were added to the list the *Algonquin*, March 2, 1917; the *Vigilancia*, March 16; the *City of Memphis* and the *Illinois*, March 17; the *Healdton* March 21 (the latter sunk even outside the prohibited zone); and the *Aztec*,

* The right to do this is plainly implied in the President's constitutional powers. He wished, however, to feel that he had the authority of Congress behind him.

April 1. Up to this time 226 Americans, many of them women and children, had lost their lives by the action of German submarines. It was not necessary after what had already happened for the German Government to give us any further evidence of perfidy. It was, however, to do so, and to allow by mischance to fall into our hands a despatch which is remarkable, even in the history of her own tortuous and dishonest diplomacy. The document came to the knowledge of our State Department during the last week in February. It had been forwarded by Zimmermann, the German Foreign Minister to the German Minister in Mexico. It had been written on January 19, in other words, while we were still discussing peace, three days before President Wilson issued his proposal for world peace, and twelve days before Germany announced her intention of resuming unrestricted submarine warfare. It read as follows:

"On the 1st of February we intend to begin submarine warfare unrestricted. In spite of this it is our intention to endeavor to keep neutral the United States of America. If this at-

tempt is not successful, we propose an alliance on the following basis with Mexico: That we shall give general financial support, and it is understood that Mexico is to reconquer the lost territory in New Mexico, Texas, and Arizona. The details are left to you for settlement. You are instructed to inform the President of Mexico of the above in great confidence as soon as it is certain that there will be an outbreak of war with the United States and suggest that the President of Mexico on his own initiative should communicate with Japan suggesting adherence at once to this plan: at the same time offer to mediate between Germany and Japan. Please call to the attention of the President of Mexico that the employment of ruthless submarine warfare now promises to compel England to make peace in a few months."

Patience was no longer a virtue. On April 2, the President summoned an extra session of Congress, and addressed the Senate as follows:

". . . The present German submarine warfare against commerce is a warfare against Mankind. It is a war against all nations. American ships have been sunk, American lives taken, in ways which it has stirred us very deeply to learn of, but the ships and people of other neutral and friendly nations have been

sunk and overwhelmed in the waters in the same way. There has been no discrimination. The challenge is to all mankind. Each nation must decide for itself how it will meet it. . . . There is one choice we cannot make, we are incapable of making: we will not choose the path of submission and suffer the most sacred rights of our nation and our people to be ignored or violated. The wrongs against which we now array ourselves are no common wrongs; they cut to the very roots of human life.

"With a profound sense of the solemn and even tragical character of the step I am taking and of the grave responsibilities which it involves, but in unhesitating obedience to what I deem my constitutional duty, I advise that the Congress declare the recent course of the Imperial German Government to be in fact nothing less than war against the Government and people of the United States; that it formally accept the status of belligerent which has thus been thrust upon it; and that it take immediate steps not only to put the country in a more thorough state of defense but also to exert all its power and employ all its resources to bring the Government of the German Empire to terms and end the war. . . . It will involve the utmost practicable co-operation in counsel and action with the Governments now at war with Germany. . . .

"We have no quarrel with the German people. We have no feeling toward them but one of sympathy and friendship. It was not

upon their impulse that their Government acted in entering this war. It was not with their previous knowledge or approval. It was a war determined upon as wars used to be determined upon in the old unhappy days when peoples were nowhere consulted by their rulers, and wars were provoked and waged in the interest of dynasties or of little groups of ambitious men who were accustomed to use their fellow men as pawns and tools. Self-governed nations do not fill their neighbor states with spies or set the course of intrigue to bring about some critical posture of affairs which will give them an opportunity to strike and make conquest. Such designs can be successfully worked out only under cover and where no one has the right to ask questions. Cunningly contrived plans of deception or aggression, carried, it may be, from generation to generation, can be worked out and kept from the light only within the privacy of courts or behind the carefully guarded confidences of a narrow and privileged class. They are happily impossible where public opinion commands and insists upon full information concerning all the nation's affairs.

"A steadfast concert for peace can never be maintained except by a partnership of democratic nations. No autocratic Government could be trusted to keep faith within it or to observe its covenants. It must be a league of honor, a partnership of opinion. Intrigue would eat its vitals away; the plottings of inner

circles who could plan what they would and render account to no one would be a corruption seated at its very heart. Only free peoples can hold their purpose and their honor steady to a common end and prefer the interests of mankind to any narrow interest of their own. . . .

" . . . The world must be made safe for democracy. Its peace must be planted upon the tested foundations of political liberty. We have no selfish ends to serve. We desire no conquest, no dominion. We seek no indemnities for ourselves, no material compensation for the sacrifices we shall freely make. We are but one of the champions of the rights of mankind. We shall be satisfied when those rights have been made as secure as the faith and the freedom of nations can make them. . . ."

The reasons given by the President set forth so calmly and judicially the main points then immediately at issue that it is hardly necessary to discuss them further. He was right in asserting that the war had been brought about without the previous knowledge of the German people. He was still, however, too charitable in believing that it was brought about without the tacit approval of at least a large majority.

Four days later, on April 6, 1917, Congress

decreed that "the state of war between the United States and the Imperial German Government which has thus been thrust upon the United States is hereby formally declared."

The historical documents make plain how slowly, how deliberately, how unwillingly we were pushed into war and for what reasons. Principles were involved and they were, to be sure, the highest principles known to free men. But in the face of the record it is a mistake for any one to believe that we went into this war to fight any other nation's battles. If ever we were threatened in our own existence it was in the years 1914–1917. No cause was ever more truly or directly our own, or involved more completely the fundamental basis of our government than the cause in which we are now engaged. If for the Germans, with their philosophy of aggression, it was a question of "world power or downfall," for us, with our traditions of independence, it was a case of victory or annihilation as a free people.

What tolerance and a love of peace could do to prevent this calamity had been done. So long as we had the poor security of "a scrap

of paper" between ourselves and Germany we treated her as a friend. Never until our entry into the war did our government in a single instance deviate from the course of strict neutrality as interpreted by intelligent, conscientious and impartial judges. We had closed our eyes to Germany's deliberate violation of treaties, to her brutal and inhuman disregard of all the laws of war on land. We had refrained from protesting her offenses against The Hague Conventions which we ourselves had signed with her; we had overlooked her attacks on our rights on the seas, and accepted settlements and a promise for the deaths of over two hundred of our citizens. Our President worked loyally for a peace of principle at a time when Germany proclaimed it was her desire to make peace, and yet even while she said it, she was conspiring against us in secret, until for the sake of our existence and our honor we replied at last and declared upon her an honest war in the open.

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